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# The current situation of persons with disabilities in Jordan

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## Question

*What is the current situation of persons with disabilities (PWD) in Jordan? Specifically, please identify information on the following aspects:*

- a) Recent data on the state of PWD in Jordan, such as data on access to basic services for PWD.*
- b) Analyses of the political, social, cultural, and economic context for PWD in Jordan. Relevant issues could include, for example: norms and behaviours towards PWD; gender equality; social cohesion; the impact of violent conflict on the mental health and psychosocial needs of PWD; and any issues particular to Jordan.*
- c) Assessments of laws on the rights of PWD in Jordan.*

*Please identify issues particular to PWD amongst Syrian refugees within the above aspects. Wherever possible in the report, please provide data that are disaggregated, e.g. by age and gender.*

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1. Overview
2. Data on disability prevalence and status in Jordan
3. The social and cultural and economic context for PWDs
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*The K4D helpdesk service provides brief summaries of current research, evidence, and lessons learned. Helpdesk reports are not rigorous or systematic reviews; they are intended to provide an introduction to the most important evidence related to a research question. They draw on a rapid desk-based review of published literature and consultation with subject specialists.*

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# 1. Overview

## Introduction

This helpdesk research report seeks to explore the current situation of persons with disabilities (PWD) in Jordan. It presents recent data on the state of PWD in Jordan, such as data on access to basic services for PWD. It also considers the political, social, cultural, and economic context for PWD in Jordan. Finally, it explores laws and policies relevant to the rights of PWD in Jordan. It considers the situation for Syrian refugees with disabilities with regards to the above themes. Where possible, the report presents data disaggregated by age and gender.

## Summary statistics

National disability prevalence	13 percent
Number of persons with a disability	1,100,000
Prevalence of Syrian refugees in Jordan with physical or intellectual needs	30 percent
Percentage of children with disabilities receiving education	3 percent
Percentage of persons with disabilities who are illiterate	35.3 percent
Estimated Syrian refugee children of school age in Jordan with a disability	10,000-15,000 children
Percentage of schools accommodating disabled students with an accessible latrine	11 percent
Employment rate of persons with disabilities	16.1 percent
Percent of persons with disabilities who are female	41 percent
Leading type of disability	Locomotor disability (17.3 percent of the total)
Percent of refugees in Jordan with a significant injury	8 percent (of which 90 percent were conflict-related)
Percent of refugees who had been injured and experience psychological distress	80 percent
Percentage of impairments of refugees in Jordan.	44.2 percent physical 42.5 percent sensory 13.4 percent intellectual
Percentage of impairments in child refugees in Jordan	36 percent physical 25 percent visual 19 percent mental
Percent of refugees had multiple impairments	20 Percent

## Methodology

This report is based on 15 days of desk-based research. The methodology employed involved a non-systematic internet based search and consultation with experts, who have knowledge of disability issues in Jordan. The resources referenced in this report include academic studies, as well as institutional/grey literature. The resources included were published between 2013 and 2018 and written in English.

## Population of Jordan

There is a paucity of reliable data on disability prevalence in Jordan. The current official estimate of disability prevalence is 13 percent of the population, amounting to over 1,100,000 people. The 2004 census from Jordan reported a disability prevalence rate of 1.23 percent. In 2007 the prevalence rate was estimated to be 1.9 percent, with 41 percent of persons with disabilities being female. Prevalence figures for disability in the Arab region have historically been far lower than the global disability prevalence rate, which is estimated by the World Health Organization to be 15 percent.

Data from 2010 indicates that a similar percentage of persons with disability (59 percent) had been married, compared to the total population (59.7 percent). The vast majority of people with disabilities (84 percent) live in urban areas. For the elderly (people over 65) the disability prevalence rate was 13.9 percent, despite this age group only representing 6 percent of the population. Census data from 2015 reported a disability prevalence rate of 2.7 percent, although testing of a disability module supported by UNICEF reported a disability prevalence rate of 13 percent for the same year. Another source stated that the 2015 census found that 11.2 percent of Jordan's population aged 5 years and older had a disability. If children had been included, the rate was estimated at 12 percent. It is not clear why this discrepancy exists.

UNICEF the Jordanian government to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in statistical analysis in the future. In 2016 the Higher Council of Affairs of Persons with Disabilities stated that the official estimate of disability prevalence is 13 percent, which remains current.

## Refugees

The official number of refugees in Jordan is just under 750,000, of whom nearly 90 percent are from Syria. Over 80 percent reside in urban areas, with over 140,000 refugees living in camps. Just under 80,000 live in Za'atari, which is the largest. It is possible Jordan has many hundreds of thousands of unregistered refugees. Despite refugee registration services being operational in Jordan, the disabilities of many refugees are not recognised or recorded. Improved cooperation between all stakeholders (including local disabled person organisations) will improve data collection.

In 2013 it was estimated that 10 percent of Syrian refugee children in camps in Jordan had a disability. No data is available for those living in host communities. In 2014 it was estimated that 22 percent of refugees in Jordan had an impairment or disability. A different study from 2014 reported that only 4 percent of Syrian refugees had a disability. The rate for school aged children was 3 percent and the rate for 18-24 years olds was 3.4 percent. A total of 9 percent of the refugees assessed were injured or chronically ill. Another study from 2014 found that 30 percent of refugees had specific needs, with 20 percent being affected by physical, sensory or intellectual impairment. Five percent had suffered an injury, of which 80 percent had resulted from the

conflict. The elderly accounted for 10 percent of refugees with specific needs, despite this group representing 5 percent of the refugee population. 77 percent of elderly refugees had specific needs and 65 percent showed signs of psychological distress. Child refugees are twice as likely as other refugees to suffer psychological distress.

Data from 2015 suggested a prevalence of 25.9 percent for Syrian refugees in Jordan with an impairment. However, an estimate from 2016 reported a disability prevalence rate of 2.36 percent for refugees in Jordan. An estimate from 2016 suggests that for refugees in Azraq camp, the disability prevalence rate is 2.27 percent, of which, 36.6 percent are children. An estimate from 2017 suggested a rate of 10 percent. A study using the Washington Group questions from 2016 reported a 27.55 percent rate. An estimate from 2018 suggests that 30 percent of Syrian refugees in Jordan have specific physical or intellectual needs. As the Syrian war continues, the number of refugees in Jordan with disabilities is likely to increase.

## Education

Over 7,000 students with disabilities are enrolled in nearly 750 schools in Jordan. The representation between males and females is almost equal. However, an estimate from 2015 suggests that only three percent of children with disabilities receive a proper education. An estimate from 2017 suggests that the percentage of disabled students in school was 0.13 percent, although the details of this statistic are not clear. In 2014 it was estimated that 35.3 percent of persons with disabilities in Jordan are illiterate, compared to 11 percent of the total population. A greater percentage of females (40 percent) were illiterate compared to males (32 percent). Educational attainment favoured males at all levels.

Data for education on refugee children with disabilities is limited. In 2014, an estimated 10,000-15,000 Syrian refugee children in Jordan had a disability and were of school age. An assessment from 2016 suggests varying levels of disability prevalence as well as educational enrolment depending on location within a camp or a host community. For the camp setting, nine percent of refugee children had a disability, compared to three percent in host communities. In host communities, 49 percent of children with disabilities and 64 percent of children without disabilities attend school. In the camp environment, 48 percent of children with disabilities and 52 percent of children without disabilities attend school.

Data from 2013 suggest that 36,000 children of school going age are in Za'atari camp, which could mean that 3,600 child refugees of school going age are located in Za'atari. A study from 2015 suggests 3 percent of school aged refugee children had a disability and less than half of them were attending school. The most common reason for non-attendance was lack of physical accessibility. Younger children with disabilities are more likely to attend than older children and girls are more likely to attend than boys.

## Health

Jordan free Social Health Insurance to all people with disabilities yet in 2017 it was estimated that a third of Jordanians with disabilities were not covered. Also, despite many medical centres now being physically accessible with specially trained staff, challenges around transportation to the centres persist.

The conflict in Syria has increased the prevalence of disability for refugees, many of whom are now located in Jordan. Mental health is expected to affect many refugees, although it is

challenging to quantify prevalence. Despite challenges around prevalence and diagnosis, it is acknowledged that there is unmet demand for health services from refugees with disabilities in Jordan. There is a trend of donors funding severe or urgent medical conditions, and not funding long-term, non-life-threatening conditions. In 2014 it was estimated that seven percent of refugees with a non-communicable disease also had an impairment. In terms of mental health, in 2014, 20,000 consultations for mental health disorders were reported in Za'atari camp with 27 percent of these being for severe emotional disorder.

## **WASH**

Limited data on WASH with regards to persons with disability in Jordan is available. A regional study from 2014 focusing on Irbid, Ma'an, Mafraq, Zarqa, and Amman reported 151 schools had disabled students but only 54 percent of these had latrines that children with disabilities could access. National data from 2017 suggest that in Jordan nearly 750 schools accommodate students with disabilities, but only 11 percent of these have a universal-design latrine for students with available. Data from 2013 suggests that 300,000 refugees in camps require their WASH needs to be considered as a matter of priority. Also, 250,000 refugees in host communities require improved WASH facilities.

## **Social protection**

There are various social protection schemes in place in Jordan for persons with disability. This includes a pension allowance and a Care Cash Assistance scheme which benefited over 7,000 families in 2010. In 2015 it was reported that 4,000 persons with disabilities had benefited from various social safety nets implemented by the Jordanian Ministry of Social Development. Many of the initiatives are exclusively for Jordanians, in some situations refugees can access them. Data from 2017 suggests that the Ministry for Social Development administers support to 12,000 people with disabilities, accounting for 12 percent of the National Aid Fund.

## **Employment/jobs**

Data from 2014 suggest the employment rate of persons with disabilities in Jordan was 16.1 percent, where as 1.7 percent were unemployed and 82.2 percent were not economically active. For the total population these ratios are 36.6 percent, 4.4 percent and 59 percent respectively. More men with disabilities (23.8 percent) are employed than women (4.8 percent). Data from 2015 suggests 7.7 percent of people with disabilities of working age in Jordan were working, while 9.9 percent were unemployed but actively looking for jobs. In 2017 it was reported that employment rate among men without disabilities was 61.4 percent, but 32.8 percent for men with disabilities. For women without disabilities the rate was 13.5 percent compared to 5.2 percent for women with disabilities. Data from 2017 suggests that for the public sector the employment rate for persons with disability was less than 1.0 percent, while for the private sector the rate was 0.5 percent.

## **Gender**

In 2010 41 percent of persons with disabilities were female and 59 percent were male. In terms of education for persons with disability in Jordan, enrolment was equal for males and females. However, more females with disabilities are illiterate (40 percent) compared to males (32 percent).

## Causes of disability

Locomotor disability is the leading type of disability in Jordan accounting for 17.3 percent of the total. Vision loss was the second leading type, accounting for 16.2 percent. Data from 2014 found that of the impairments of refugees in Jordan, 44.2 percent were physical, 42.5 percent were sensory and 13.4 percent were intellectual. 20 percent of refugees had multiple impairments. An assessment in 2015 found that for refugee children 36 percent of disabilities were physical, 25 percent were visual and 19 percent were mental.

## Norms and behaviours

There is a genuine political will in Jordan improve disability data quality and increase the visibility of people with disabilities. National legislation affirming the rights of persons with disabilities, yet negative attitudes still exist in some Jordanian communities, leading to exclusion and discrimination. Women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to exclusion. Attitudinal challenges may act as a barrier to education for children with disabilities. Refugees with disabilities may face double discrimination due to their ethnic origin as well as their disability status.

## Cultural issues

Jordan has a strong tradition of addressing disability issues and as a country has been internationally recognised for its efforts. It is often viewed as a regional leader on disability issues. However, continuing stigma surrounding disability results in people with certain types of disabilities being hidden away. Historically some Arab societies have displayed negative attitudes and beliefs towards people with disabilities, regarding them as a burden or shameful. Health-related stigma also exists, showing a lack of understanding about the abilities of people with disabilities. Recent evidence from Jordan indicates that more positive beliefs about disabilities are being adopted leading to more inclusive societies. Causes of disability are believed to be supernatural, faith-based and biomedical. The term disability in common parlance is only used to describe visible physical impairment.

## Economic context

As noted in the earlier section on employment, in 2014 it was reported that in Jordan, 16.1 percent of persons with disabilities are employed, 1.7 percent are unemployed and 82.2 percent are reported as being not economically active. A societal lack of awareness about disabled people results in their marginalisation in the labour market. However, recently economic opportunities are being created for persons with disabilities in Jordan through improved vocational training programmes, enrolment fee exemptions and employment quotas. Challenges for persons with disabilities in the labour market including appropriate pay levels, suitable training courses and prevailing negative attitudes, must be addressed. With regards to refugees and employment, in Jordan they do not officially have the right to work, although many do. Illegal work may increase risks of exploitation and dangerous working conditions. School age refugee may end up working to support their family, especially if a family member has a disability. In Jordanian culture, men with disabilities may be ridiculed if they cannot work. Some families would not allow women with disabilities to go to work due to fears of abuse and exploitation.



## **Gender equality and women's empowerment**

The Jordanian Constitution establishes gender equality, which is affirmed by The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, yet females with disabilities in Jordan suffer from discrimination in employment, society, marriage and education. Poor women with disabilities are especially vulnerable. In Arab culture, if a family has multiple members with disabilities, men with disabilities are likely to be given priority. Several campaigns have been launched in Jordan to improve awareness of violations of the rights of women with disabilities. However, discrimination continues in various areas of Jordanian society. Citizenship and employment rights are still lacking for women. Deeply rooted cultural and social norms discriminate against women, resulting in low levels of self-determination and decision-making. Disabled women are more discriminated against than men, facing multiple layers of stigma as Arabic society is patriarchal. People with disabilities are often stereotyped and stigmatised as asexual. Women with disabilities seldom participate in decision making about their lives. Women with disabilities do not have a strong presence in either the women's movement or the disability movement.

## **Social cohesion**

Jordan has a history of being open to all Arabs, resulting in it becoming a haven for refugees. It is known for its security and stability. Specific national legislation assures the inclusion of individuals with disabilities, but negative attitudes from communities within Jordan may reduce the social inclusion experienced by persons with disabilities. Refugees with disabilities in Jordan may face dual discrimination. Border restrictions may isolate individuals with disabilities from their carers or families.

## **Impact of conflict on PWDs (to include mental health and psycho-social needs)**

Legislation and policies are in place to provide protection, care and support to people at in times of conflict. To respond to external conflict, specialised relief agencies such as the Hashemite Charitable Organization, have been established to respond, prioritising the needs of persons with disabilities. The Syrian crisis is having a significant impact on Jordan and the continued violence will increase the number of persons with disabilities seeking refuge in Jordan. The influx of refugees fleeing the fighting has increased the demand for health care provision, both in terms of physical and mental health. Data from 2014 suggests that eight percent of refugees in Jordan have a significant injury of which 90 percent were conflict-related. A different study from 2014 found that nearly 20 percent of refugees felt unable to live normal lives due to the physiological impact of the conflict. 13 percent expressed a need for counselling or psychological support. Data from 2016 found that 80 percent of refugees interviewed who had been injured experience psychological distress.

## **Gender based violence**

GBV services in Jordan are limited and awareness is low. Service provision is plagued by exploitation. Disabled women in Jordan are more vulnerable to abuse and stigma than disabled men. Data from 2015 found women and girls with disabilities and female caregivers are at most at risk. The leading form of GBV is sexual violence, followed by emotional violence and exploitation. The wives of men with disabilities who may be unaccompanied by a male are particularly vulnerable. Males with intellectual disabilities were also at risk of sexual violence.

Refugees with disabilities may be at particular risk, as displacement may have a negative impact on the existence of support structures.

## **Other social issues particular to Jordan**

Jordan has an enlightened royal family, a national tradition of openness and generosity, and one of the best educational systems in the Middle East. All of these factors are regarded as positive in terms of the rights of persons with disabilities.

## **National disability relevant laws and policies for Jordan**

The main laws in Jordan relating to the persons with disabilities are the Law of Disabled people care (1993), Law on the rights of persons with disabilities (2007) and Law on the rights of persons with disabilities (2017). Jordan has a national disability strategy, a specific disability law, articles on disability included in the constitution, focal points for disability in line ministries, direct involvement of persons with disabilities in government mechanisms, indicating its position as a regional leader for disability rights.

## **International disability relevant laws and policies for Jordan**

Jordan ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008.

## **Brief history of disability relevant laws for Jordan**

In 1989, Jordan passed a Provisional Act for the Welfare of Disabled People. In 1993, the Act for the Welfare of Disabled People came into existence. This Act was reviewed and replaced by The Disabled Individuals Rights Act. In 2005, Jordan was awarded the Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award. In 2007, King Abdullah II announced a new strategy for persons with disabilities focusing on areas including health, awareness, and employment. Jordan ratified the CRPD in 2008. Jordan established the Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities as an independent national institution responsible for policymaking and planning. In 2016, the Higher Council for People with Disabilities conducted a legislative review of the Disable People Rights Law (2007), and drafted a new law. The new law on the Rights of People with Disabilities (PWD), was endorsed by the Jordanian Lower House in May 2017. The new law includes informed consent, improving autonomy over decision making. It also reaffirms the rights of persons with disability to gain education and work. While progress has been made, various other Jordanian laws are inconsistent with CRPD principles and require updating to empower persons with disabilities.



## 2. Data on disability prevalence and status in Jordan

### Population of Jordan – general

An estimated 11 to 15 percent of the population of Jordan suffers from a disability, amounting to over 1,100,000 people. Previous estimates of disability prevalence range from 1.23 percent to 13 percent. The disability prevalence rate for people over 65 years old was 13.9 percent, despite this group representing 6 percent of the total population. 84 percent of persons with a disability live in an urban area.

There are a lack of accurate data on disability prevalence in Jordan (Al-Zboon & Hatmal 2016, UNHCR 2016). The Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities in Jordan estimates that 11 to 15 percent of the population suffers from disabilities, amounting to over 1,100,000 people (Dupire 2018).

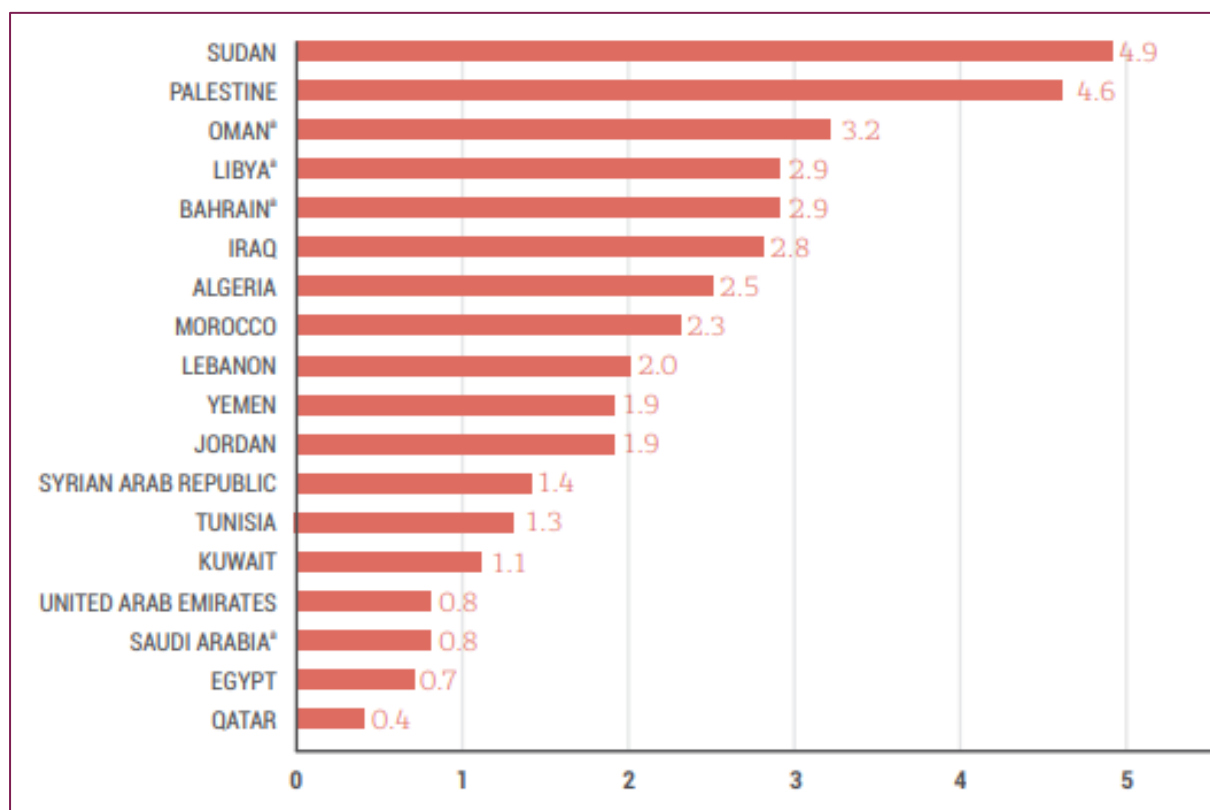
The data available is limited for various cultural and technical reasons, including society's view of disability and data collection methodology. Data sources include the Jordanian Department of Statistics, national censuses, partial surveys and the reports of diagnosis centres and service institutions (UN 2015, ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014, Information and Research Center et al 2017, Curtis & Geagan 2016).

According to a Government of Jordan census from 2004, 1.23 percent of the population in Jordan has a disability (UNHCR 2016). By 2007, Jordan reported a disability prevalence rate of 1.9 percent. This was comparable to neighbouring Syria, where a 1.4 percent disability prevalence rate was reported (Amnesty International 2016). By 2010 the disability prevalence rate in Jordan was 1.9 percent (1.6 percent in females, 2.2 percent in males). 41 percent of persons with disabilities were female and 59 percent were male. By comparison, in the Arab region, Sudan was found to have the highest disability prevalence (4.9 percent), and Qatar the lowest (0.4 percent) (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014).<sup>1</sup> Official prevalence figures for disability in the Arab region are far lower than the 15 percent global disability prevalence rate estimated by the World Health Organization (Amnesty International 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> The data presented for the region is for various years, ranging from 2004 to 2011.

Figure 1 - Disability prevalence in the Arab region (percent of total population) (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014 p.10).



The ESCWA (2017) published a report looking at strengthening social protection for persons with disabilities in Arab countries, which contained data on disability prevalence. Using census data from 2015, Jordan was reported to have a disability prevalence rate of 2.7 percent.<sup>2</sup> By comparison, in the Arab region, the highest prevalence was found in Morocco (5.1 percent) and the lowest in Qatar (0.2 percent). The rate for females was 2.7 percent and the rate for males was 2.8 percent. In the region, the highest prevalence for females was found in Morocco (5.1 percent) and the lowest was found in Qatar (0.3 percent). For men, the highest prevalence was found in Morocco and Sudan (5 percent each) and the lowest was found in Qatar (0.1 percent). In Jordan, the disability prevalence rate in people over 65 years old was 13.9 percent, despite this same group only representing 6 percent of the total population. By comparison, in the Arab region, the highest disability prevalence rate in people over 65 years old was found in Morocco (31.2 percent) and the lowest was found in Mauritania (5.1 percent).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> UNICEF supported Jordan to undertake the 2015 census and include a disability module. A test of the module resulted in a disability prevalence rate of 13 percent (UNICEF 2015a).

<sup>3</sup> The data presented for the region is for various years, ranging from 2007 to 2016

Figure 2 - Total disability prevalence rates by gender (percentage) for selected countries in different years (ESCWA 2017 p.10).

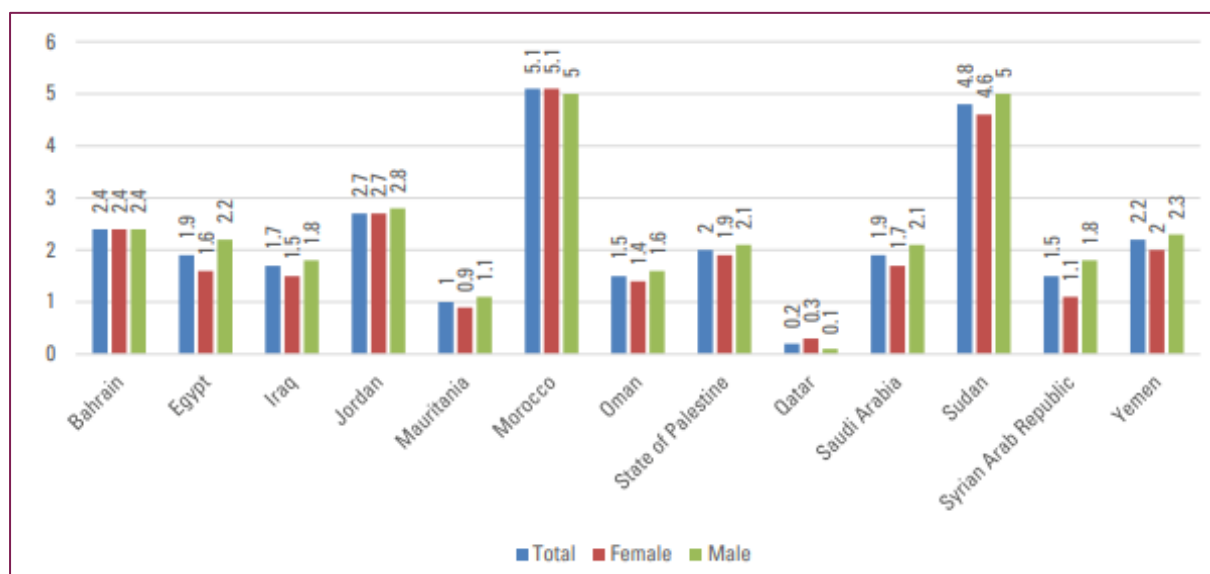
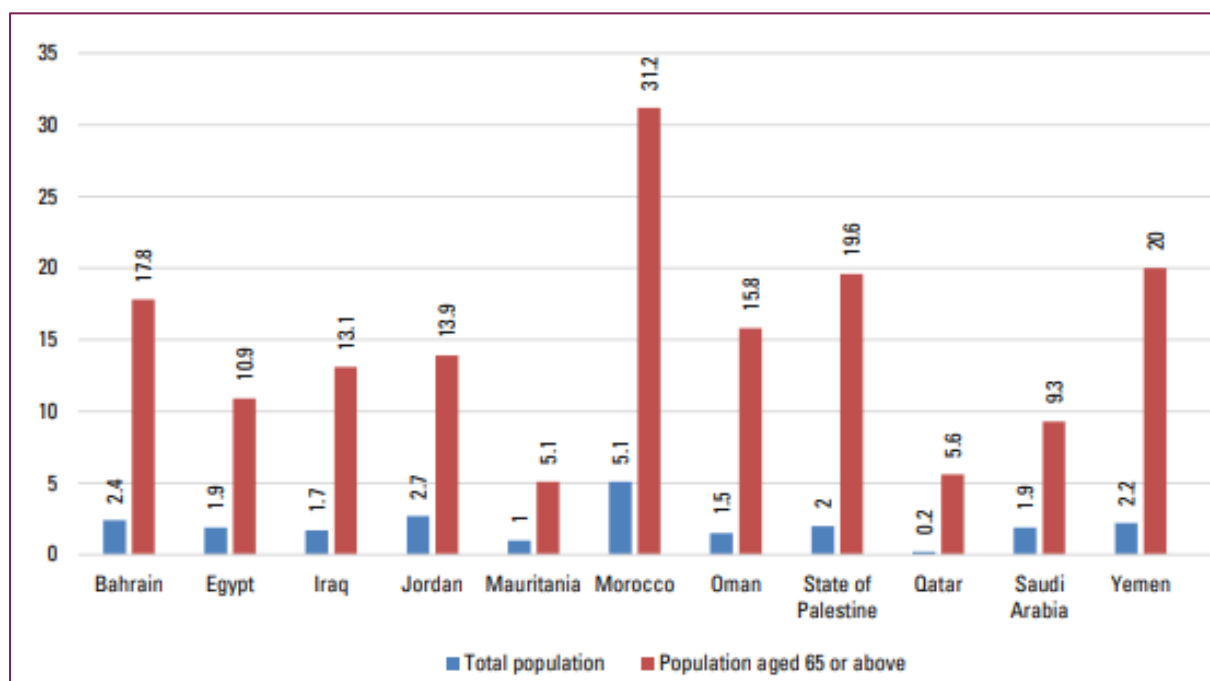


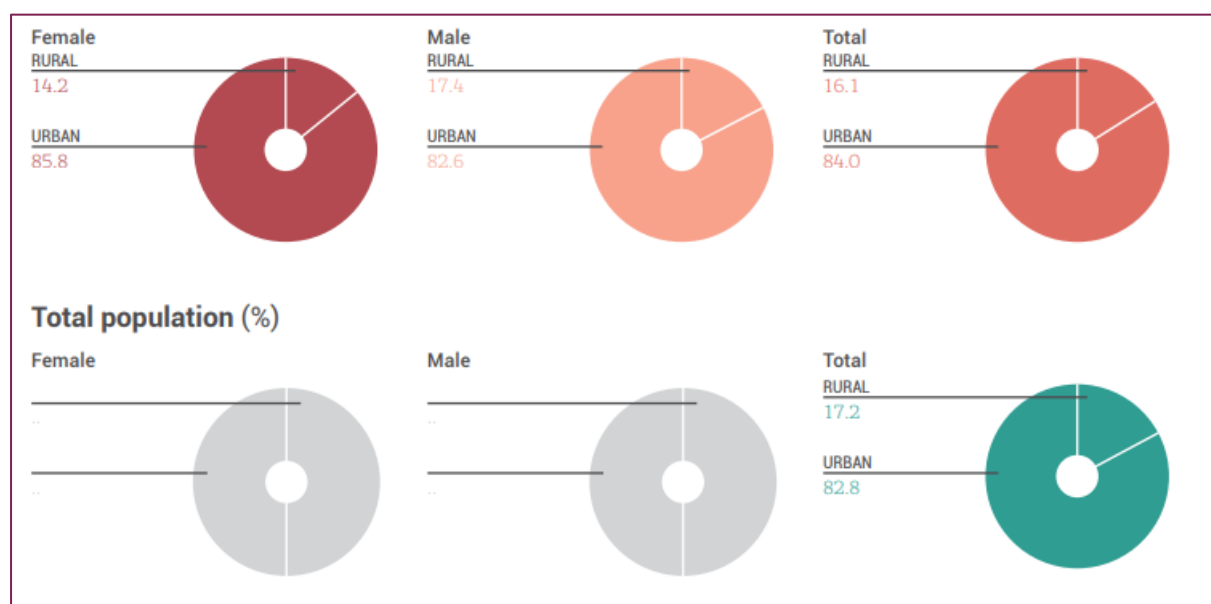
Figure 3 - Disability prevalence rates and rates for people aged 65+, 2007-2016 (percentage) (ESCWA 2017 p.11).



With regards to marital status in Jordan, and based on data from 2010 from the Department of Statistics, a similar percentage of persons with disability (59 percent) had been married, compared to the total population (59.7 percent). Slightly more females with disabilities (59.5 percent) had been married compared to males with disabilities (58.7 percent). In terms of the geographic location of persons with disability, the vast majority (84 percent) are located in urban settings. This is reflective of the fact that the majority of the total population in Jordan (82.8 percent) also live in urban areas. 85.8 percent of women with disabilities live in urban areas

compared to 82.6 percent of men with disabilities. More information is detailed below in the figure illustrating the geographic location of persons with disability in comparison to the total population (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014).

*Figure 4 – Geographic local of persons with disabilities (percentage) in Jordan (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014 P.50)*



Statistical surveys run in 2015 to verify the accuracy of census data with regards to disability found the disability rate to be four times higher than the census figure of 1.23 percent from 2004 (UN 2015). The 2015 population and housing census found that 11.2 percent of Jordan's population aged 5 years and older had a disability (Information and Research Center et al 2017, Curtis & Geagan 2016). If children under 5 who had a disability were included, this rate may rise to 12 percent (Information and Research Center et al 2017).

In 2015, UNICEF supported Jordan to undertake a census. A disability module was advocated for and accepted. Technical assistance was subsequently provided. Testing of the module suggested a disability prevalence rate of 13 percent, compared to 1.8 percent as previously recorded through the old model (UNICEF 2015a). As noted above, other sources that use census data from 2015 suggest the disability rate is 2.7 percent (ESCWA 2017). It is not clear why this discrepancy exists. UNICEF Jordan are continuing to support the Jordanian Department of Statistics to ensure that persons with disabilities were included (UNICEF 2015a). The Jordan Times (2015a) reported that the Prime Minister Abdullah Ensour confirmed the 13 percent rate. In 2016 the Higher Council of Affairs of Persons with Disabilities estimate that 13 percent of citizens (not including refugees) have a disability (UNHCR 2016). In 2017, the disability prevalence rate was also reported to be 13 percent of the population (Azzeah 2017).

To address the lack of reliable and accurate data on persons with disabilities in Jordan, there is an urgent need to conduct a thorough and comprehensive survey to identify the scale, type, nature and prevalence of disability. There is also a need to gain a better understanding of the level of services and facilities available to people with disabilities, as well as the obstacles and barriers they face that limit their enjoyment of their rights. To improve the data available the following actions have been taken:

- a. Preparatory action for the collection of detailed data on disabilities and the situation of disability according to global standards in the next census;
- b. Publication and dissemination on websites of the available data on disability.
- c. Launch of a national data system to provide information and data on persons with disabilities.

In addition, people with disabilities will be involved in data collection and research (UN 2015).

## Refugees - general

There are nearly 750,000 refugees in Jordan. The vast majority (nearly 90 percent) are from Syria. Current estimates suggest 30 percent of Syrian refugees in Jordan have specific physical or intellectual needs. Historical estimates for the disability rate for refugees in Jordan range from 2.36 percent to 26 percent. One in 15 refugees are believed to have sustained an injury. A family member has a pre-existing medical condition (e.g. disabilities or chronic illnesses) in 16 percent of refugee households in Jordan. Child refugees are twice as likely as the general refugee population to suffer psychological distress. 65 percent of older refugees experience psychological distress.

In 2014, 700,000 refugees were believed to be in Jordan (The Health Sector Working Group 2015). In 2015, UNHCR estimated that Jordan hosts nearly 620,000 Syrian refugees. Government estimates are closer to 1.4 million (Crock et al 2015). In 2018 it was estimated that there were 740,160 refugees in Jordan, of which 657,628 (88.8 percent) were from Syria. 81.1 percent of the refugees live in urban areas. 140,002 refugees live in camps (Za'atari - 78,994, Azraq - 53,967, Emirati Jordanian Camp - 7,041) (UNHCR 2018). According to Amnesty International (2016), Jordan has many hundreds of thousands of unregistered refugees. Efficient refugee registration services are operational in Jordan, yet disabilities are often not recognised or recorded (Curtis & Geagan 2016). The lack of accurate data focused on Syrian refugees which is disaggregated by gender, age and disability type is challenging. In Jordan, vulnerability assessments and information sharing has the potential to produce rich disaggregated data. Greater cooperation between government, specialist international organisations and local disabled person organisations will improve the way data on persons with disabilities is identified and recorded (Crock et al 2015).

A UNICEF desk review from 2013 estimated that up to 10 percent of Syrian refugee children had a disability (UNICEF 2014c, UNICEF 2015b). This estimate was largely in line with WHO and UNHCR global data from that time. Data was from refugees living in camps. No data was found for Syrian refugee children with disabilities in host communities (UNICEF 2015b). In 2014, of the 700,000 refugees in Jordan, 154,000 were believed to have impairments or disabilities (The Health Sector Working Group 2015). Based on data collected in 2014, UNICEF (2015b) reported that 4 percent of Syrian refugees assessed were found to be living with a disability. 3 percent of school aged children and 3.4 percent of youth (18-24 years old) have at least one disability. 9 percent of the total assessed population were currently injured or chronically ill, including those in the population who are disabled.

HelpAge & HI (2014) undertook a research project to investigate the number and needs of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon living with impairment, injury and chronic disease. They referred to these groups as people with specific needs. From the 3,202 refugees who participated in the

study, 30 percent had specific needs with 45 percent of these refugees reporting problems in accomplishing simple daily living activities. One in five refugees were affected by physical, sensory or intellectual impairment, while one in seven were affected by chronic disease. One in 20 suffered from injury, of which 80 percent had resulted directly from the conflict. The report also found that older people accounted for 10 percent of refugees with specific needs. This age group makes up 4-5 percent of the refugee population suggesting that they are disproportionately affected. This under-representation of persons with disability in UNHCR's registration database is also acknowledged by Health Sector Working Group (2015).

As many as 77 percent of older refugees were found to have specific needs. 65 percent of older refugees showed signs of psychological distress, while children who are refugees were found to be twice as likely as the general refugee population to report signs of psychological distress. 22 percent of surveyed Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon had an impairment. Half experienced difficulties in daily living activities. Of the 22 percent, 6 percent had a severe impairment. The survey highlighted a prevalence of impairment in Jordan of 26 percent (HelpAge & HI 2014). Crock et al (2015) also reported a similar prevalence for 2015 of 25.9 percent of Syrians in Jordan having an impairment. However, it should be recognised that there are significant overlaps of people experiencing impairment, injury and chronic disease.

In 2016, UNHCR recorded that 2.36 percent of refugees registered in Jordan had a disability (UNHCR 2016). This figure is disproportionately low when compared to a general population that had not been displaced by war (Curtis & Geagan 2016). Mercy Corps (2017) estimate the figure for disability prevalence rate for Syrian refugees in Jordan as closer to 10 percent. A pilot study conducted by the UNHCR, focusing on 98 refugee households in Jordan used the Washington Group questions. The results yielded a 25 percent increase in identification of disabilities, from 2.36 percent to 27.55 percent. From the cohort of 98 households, 27 individual cases of persons with disabilities were identified (UNHCR 2016).

The UN (2016) reported that as of 2016, the total registered population in Azraq camp, including those currently absent, is 53,838 individuals. There are 1,222 people with disabilities living in the camp of which 36.6 percent are children. A Vulnerability Assessment Framework (VAF), that formed part of a Comprehensive Vulnerability Assessment, reported that 16 percent of refugee households in Jordan have the presence of pre-existing medical conditions (e.g. disabilities or chronic illnesses) that have a negative impact (Ministry of Planning & International Cooperation 2018). An article published in the Jordan Times written by Dupire (2018), drew on information from UNICEF which estimates that 30 percent of Syrian refugees in Jordan have specific physical or intellectual needs.

As hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees fleeing the war reside in Jordan, the number of people with disabilities in reality is likely to be significantly higher than current estimates (UNHCR 2016). In addition to the Syrian refugees, it should be noted that Jordan is also host to refugees from other fragile and conflict affected states, including Palestine and Iraq (Curtis & Geagan 2016).

## Education

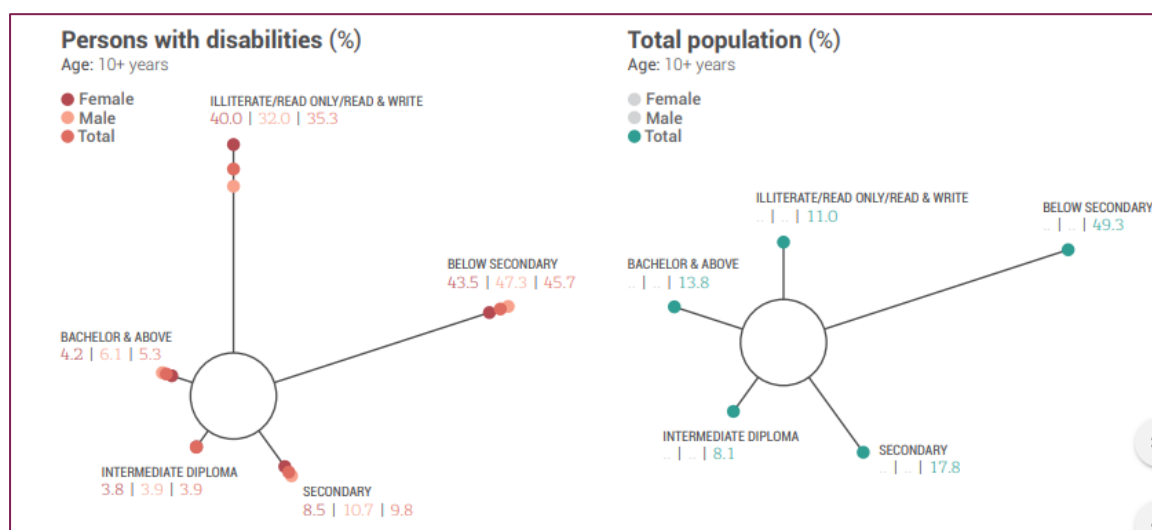
In Jordan, a total of 746 schools were found to have students with disabilities. 35.3 percent of persons with disabilities are illiterate, compared to 11 percent of the total population. 40 percent of females with disabilities are illiterate, compared to 32 percent of males with

disabilities. 51 percent of 6 to 11 year old boys with disabilities are in formal education, as are 33 percent of 12 to 17 year old boys. 65 percent of 6 to 11 year old girls with disabilities are in formal education, as are 47 percent of 12 to 17 year old girls with disabilities.

According to the Ministry of Education, 7,239 students with disabilities entered primary and secondary education in 2011 (3,640 male and 3,599 female). There are no complete data on differences in the education that males and females receive, but the numbers of boys and girls with disabilities enrolled in public education are largely the same (UN 2015). According to the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities, in Jordan, only three percent of children with disabilities receive a proper education (Jordan Times 2015a). Also, children with disabilities in Jordan represent approximately three percent of all school going aged children (UNICEF 2015b). UNICEF (2017) reported that nationally, the number of students with special needs in schools was very low. 746 schools were found to have students with disabilities. UNICEF (2017) report that the percentage of disabled students in school was 0.13 percent, although it is not clear whether this refers to the percentage of the total population or the total number of school children. The lowest percentage was found to be in Ajlun governorate (0.06 percent) and the highest percentage was found to be in Mafrq governorate (0.26 percent).

As many as 35.3 percent of persons with disabilities in Jordan are illiterate, compared to 11 percent of the total population. 45.7 percent of persons with disabilities have attained below secondary education, compared to 49.3 percent of the total population. 40 percent of females with disabilities were found to be illiterate, compared to 32 percent of males with disabilities. Educational attainment was found to favour males with disabilities at all levels of education, compared to females with disabilities (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014). Further details on educational attainment are displayed in the figure below.

*Figure 5 – Educational attainment by persons with disabilities compared to educational attainment by the total population (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014 P.49)*



Disaggregated reporting on refugee children with disabilities is yet to be achieved, making it very difficult to establish prevalence and need. Most children with disabilities are identified via referrals from implementing partners, but referral systems are limited. In host communities, data is even harder to access and there is a risk of children with disabilities being excluded from the system (Culbertson et al 2016). The estimated number of Syrian refugee children in Jordan who



are of school age (5-17) and have a disability is approximately 10,000-15,000. A sizable proportion, if not the majority of these children are not receiving education. An under identification of children with disabilities distorts the situation. The majority of schools assessed were found to be not adapted for children with disabilities (UNICEF 2014c).

In Jordan, as of 2015 UNICEF supported 1,983 children (793 male, 1,190 girls) with inclusive and psychosocial services. 48 percent were Syrian and 52 percent were Jordanian. In the Za'atari refugee camp, Mercy Corps has run an education programme for 1,100 children with disabilities. Half of these children had no previous access to school. Research based on a Joint Education Needs Assessment reported that 9 percent of children in Za'atari refugee camp are reported to have disabilities, difficulties and/or chronic illnesses, while in the host communities disabilities reportedly affect only three percent of school-aged children. In addition, in host communities, 49 percent of children with disabilities attend school, while 64 percent of children without disabilities attend school. In Za'atari, 48 percent of children with disabilities attend formal education compared with 52 percent of children without disabilities (Culbertson et al 2016).

UNICEF (2015) reported that by the end of 2015, 55 double-shifted schools were improved and made more inclusive of children with disabilities. In addition, 951 teachers were trained on inclusive education and parents/children were guided with rehabilitative sessions. 7,476 community members to encourage the education of children with disabilities. Through these efforts, 2,093 children with disabilities were integrated into formal schools by the end of 2015. In addition, children with severe disabilities were supported with home schooling opportunities.

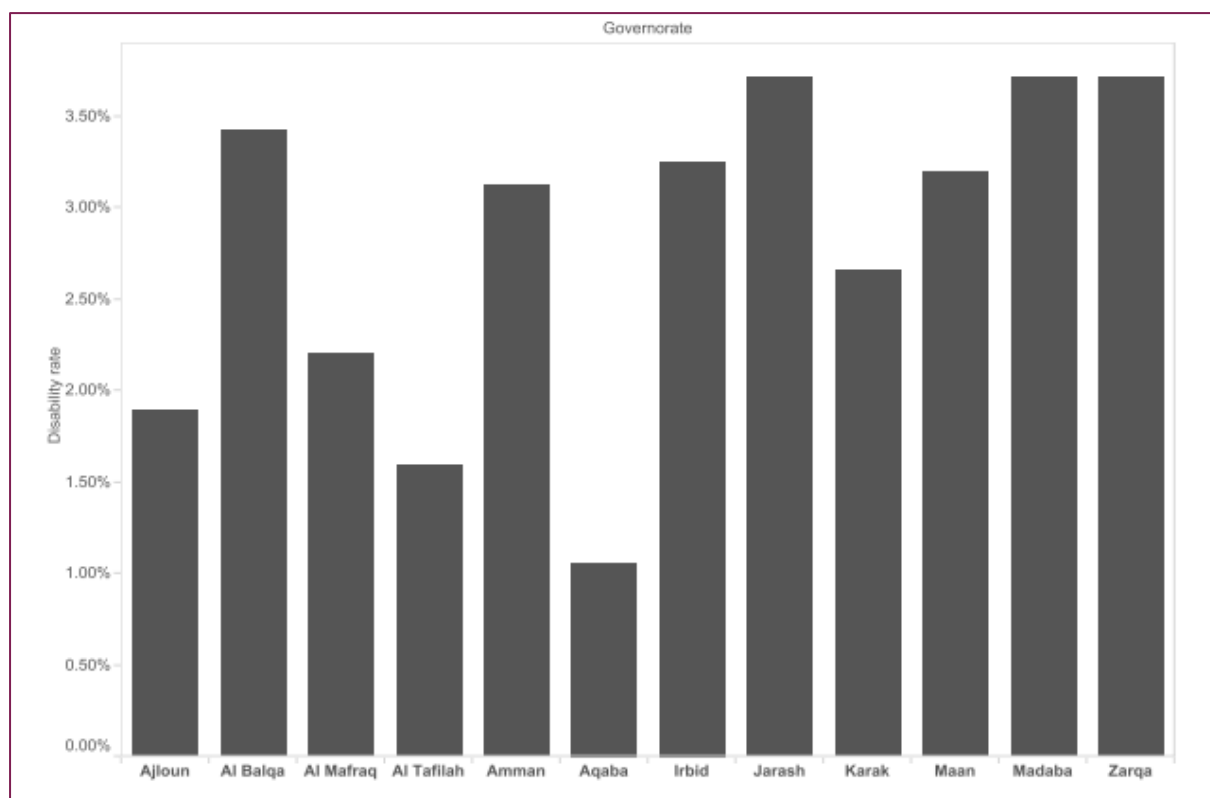
In 2013, a Joint Education Needs Assessment (JENA) was undertaken in Za'atari Refugee Camp (UNICEF 2013a). As Handicap International were planning an accessibility assessment in Za'atari, the preliminary findings were made available so they could be included in the JENA, which does not give a complete representation of the needs and barriers faced by children with disabilities. Handicap International's preliminary data show that children with disabilities generally do not go to school due to physical and attitudinal barriers to accessibility. Table 1 below shows a breakdown of identified school going children with a disability in the Za'atari camp. In 2013, when the data was published, the UN estimated that approximately 10 percent of the world's population live with a disability. Approximately 36,000 children of school going age (6-17 years old) live in Za'atari, hence, using the UN prevalence estimation, 3,600 children of school going age with a disability could be in Za'atari. The figures below are far below this prevalence. Also, it is likely that the overrepresentation of children with physical disabilities in the table can be explained by the fact that they are easier to identify (UNICEF 2013a).

Table 1 - breakdown of identified school going children with a disability in the Za'atari camp (UNICEF 2013a, p.34).

Type of disability	0-5 years old			6-18 years old			TOTAL
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	
Moving	13	25	38	29	50	79	117
Moving and speaking	-	1	1	1	6	7	8
Moving and hearing	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Moving and learning	-	1	1	-	-	-	1
Moving, speaking, hearing					1	1	1
Moving, speaking and learning	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Moving, speaking and seeing				2	2	4	4
Unspecified	1	5	6	1	9	10	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>149</b>

A JENA report from 2015 found that 3 percent of school aged children sampled had at least one disability. The highest proportion of children with a disability can be found in Jerash (3.8 percent) and the lowest in Aqaba (1.1 percent). The following figure shows the proportion of children with a disability in each governorate (UNICEF 2015b).

Figure 6 - Proportion of children with a disability in each governorate (UNICEF 2015b).



The JENA in 2015 reported that less than half (46 percent) of children with disabilities were attending formal education. However, it should be noted that as the sample was drawn from the overall population the number of children with disabilities was not high enough to enable generalisation of findings at any conventionally accepted level of statistical significance. The

most commonly stated reason for not attending formal education across all age-groups was that the school was not physically accessible. The data reveals a trend with younger children with disabilities more likely to be attending formal education compared to older peers. Girls were found to be more likely to attend formal schooling than boys. Girls with disabilities in the 6-11 age-group were twice as likely to be receiving a formal education (65 percent) compared to boys in the 12- 17 age-group (33 percent) as shown in Figure 7.

In terms of reasons for non-attendance, girls aged 6-11 with a disability reported that the most common reasons included physical inaccessibility of school; lack of specialist education services; or family expectations, as illustrated in Figure 8. Boys between 6-11 years old most often said to not be attending because the school was not physically accessible or that there was a lack of specialist education services, as shown in Figure 9 below.

Figure 10 focuses on the reasons why girls aged 12-17 with a disability did not attend school. It shows the main reasons are because the school was physically inaccessible, that they were suffering psychological effects, or that specialist education was lacking. Boys between 12-17 years old were said to not be attending due to the school not being physically accessible, that specialist education services needed were not available, or that they were suffering psychological effects, as shown in Figure 11 (UNICEF 2015b).

*Figure 7 - Proportion of refugee boys and girls with a disability that were currently attending formal education (UNICEF 2015b, p.56)*

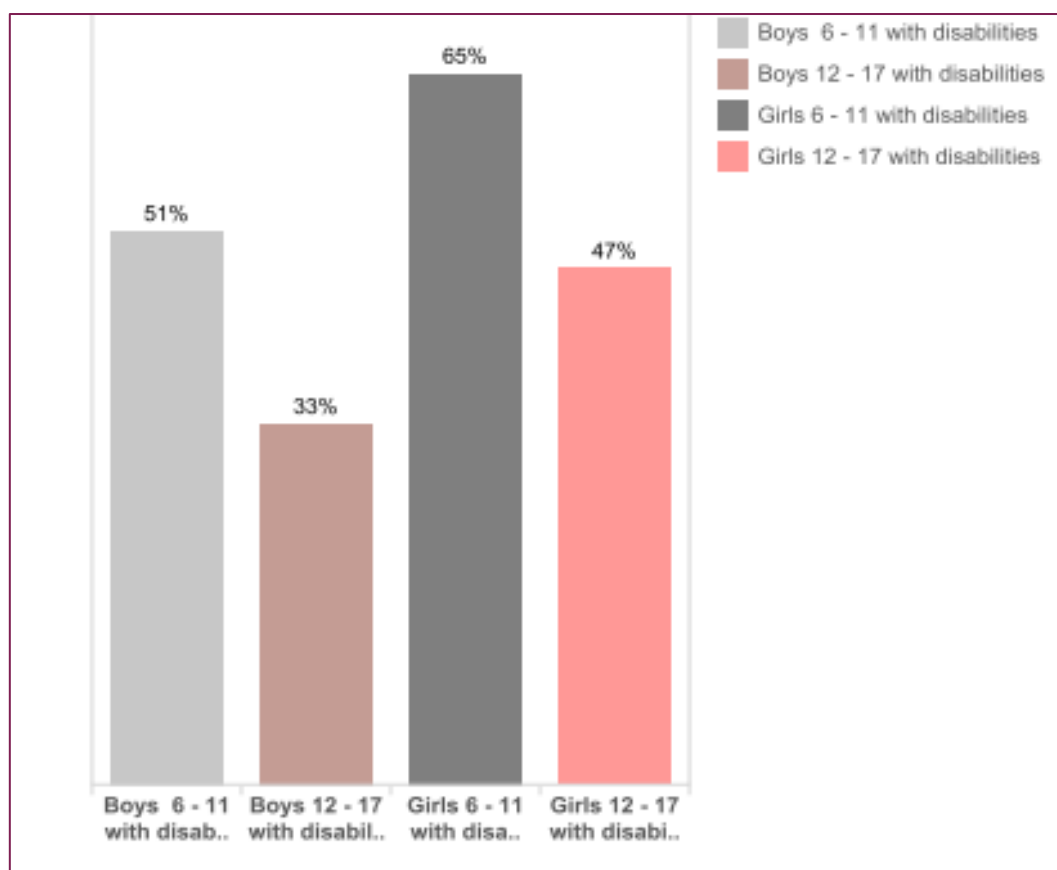


Figure 8 - Number of girls aged 6-11 with a disability that were not attending formal schooling – by reason for not attending (UNICEF 2015, p.56).

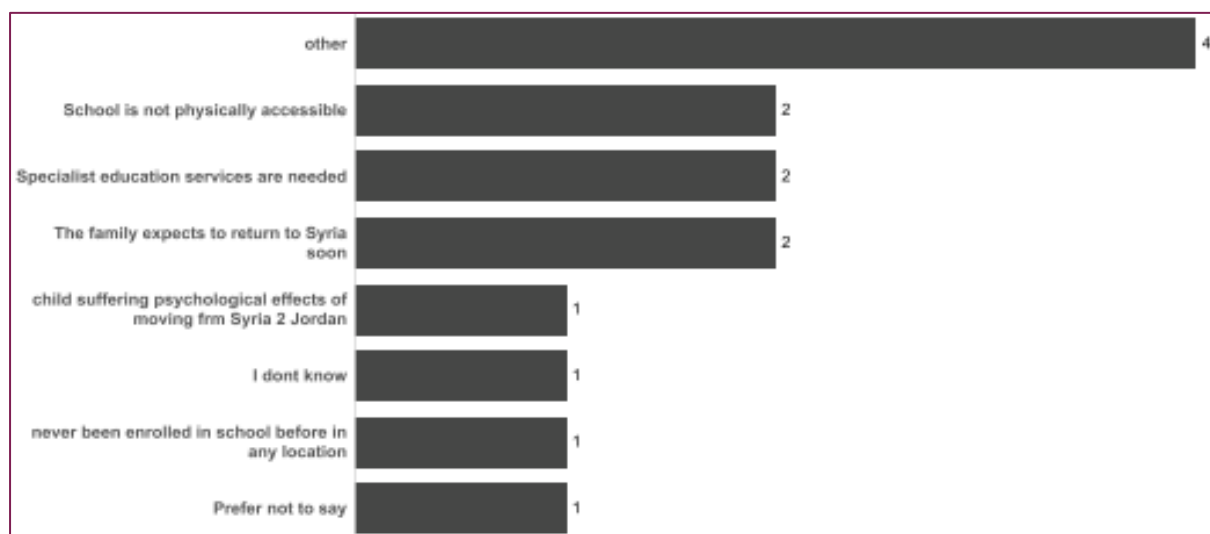


Figure 9 - Number of boys aged 6-11 with a disability that were not attending formal schooling – by reason for not attending (UNICEF 2015b, p.57).

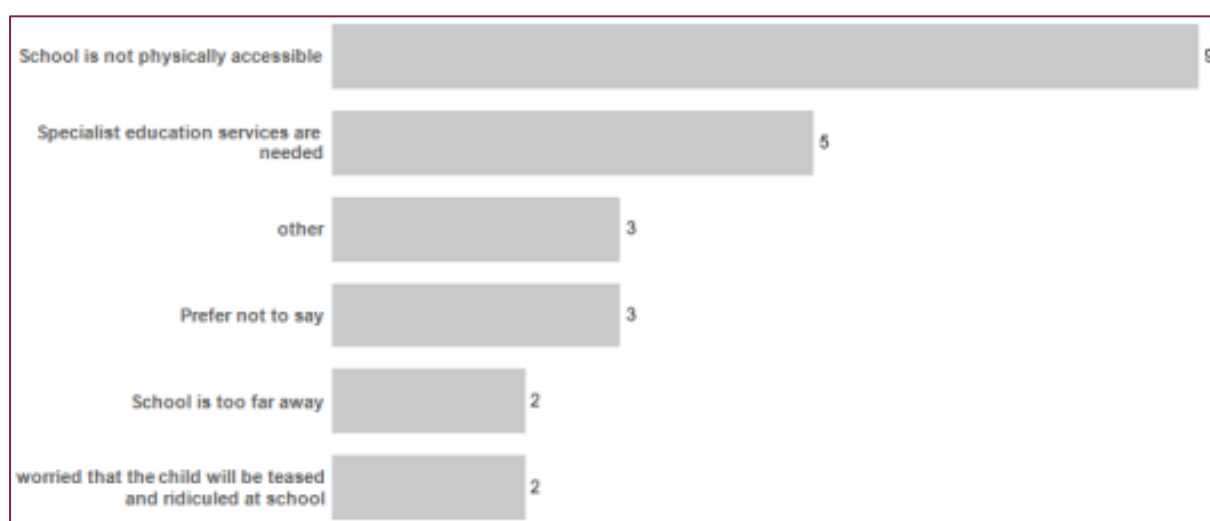


Figure 10 - Number of girls aged 12-17 with a disability that were not attending formal schooling – by reason for not attending (UNICEF 2015b, p.57).

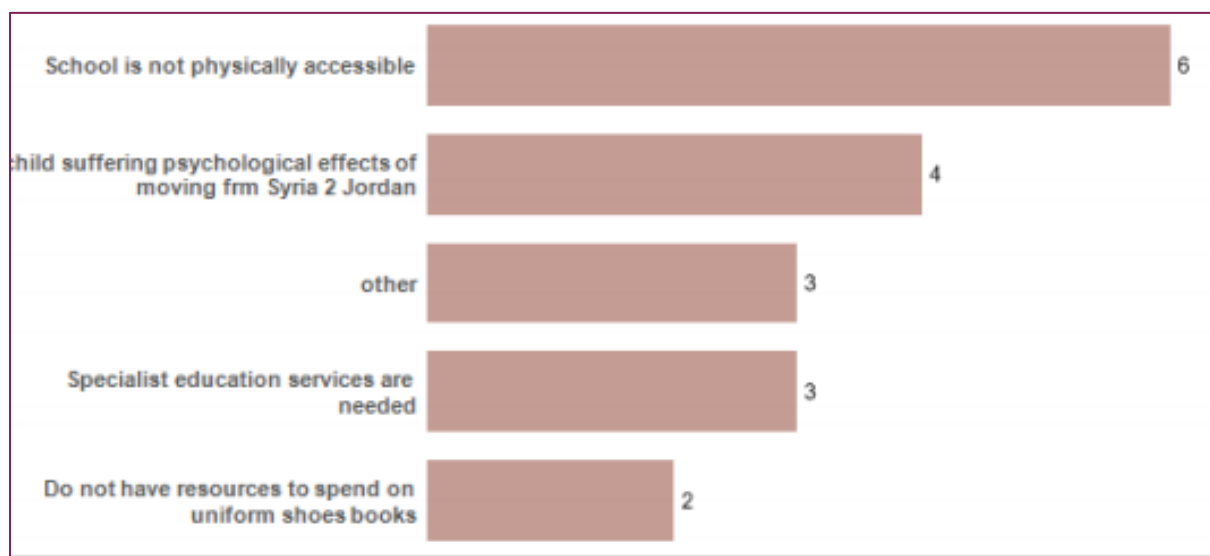
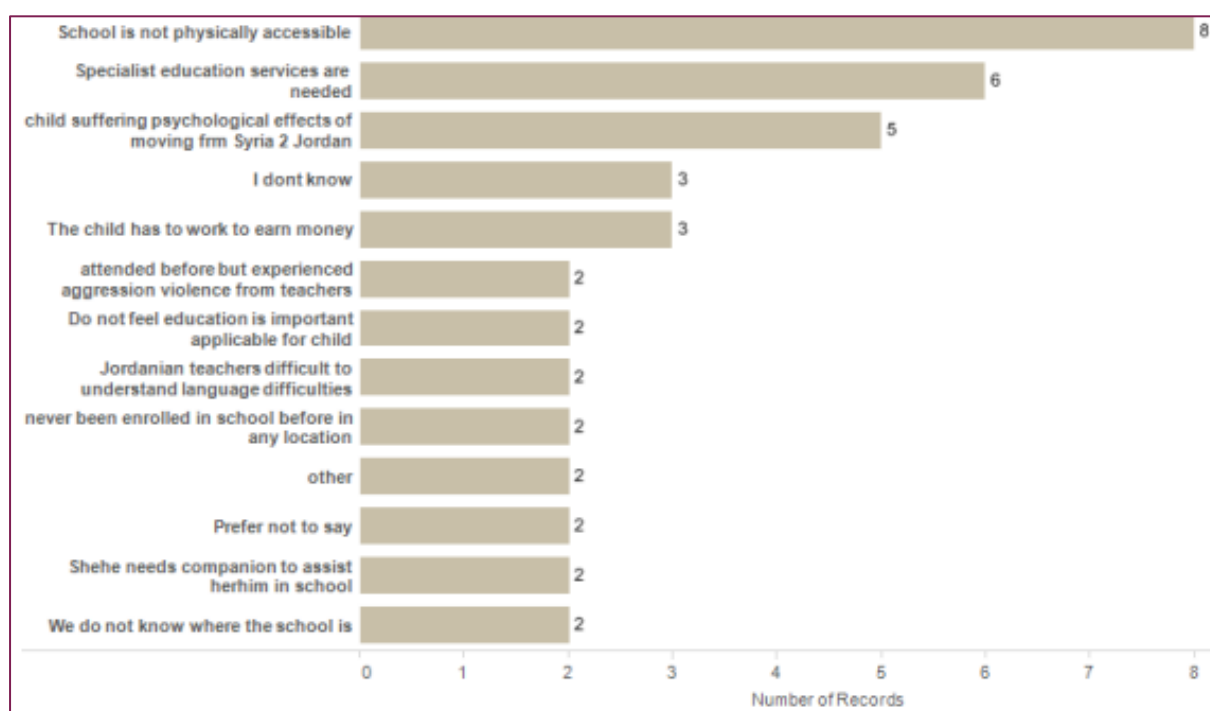
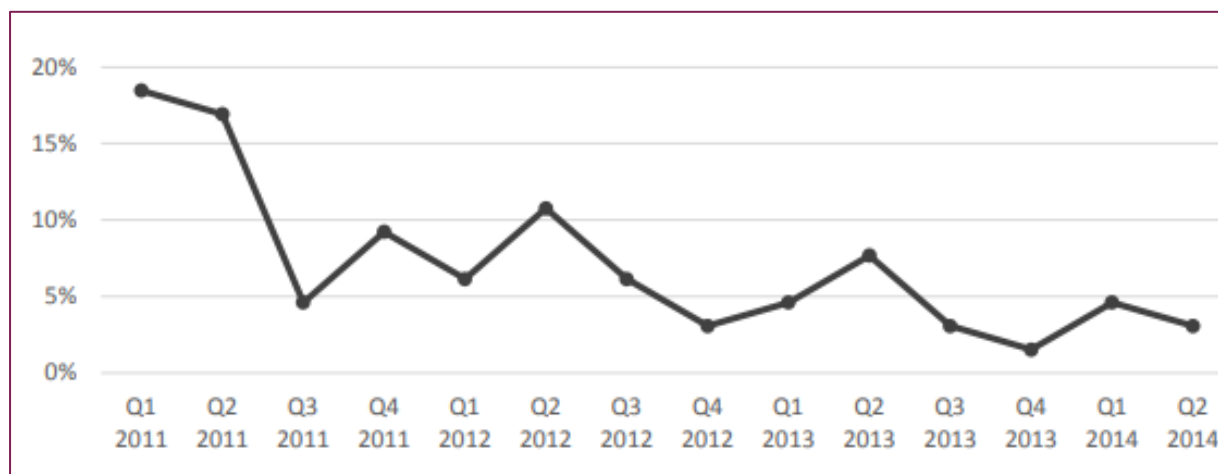


Figure 11 - Number of boys aged 12-17 with a disability that were not attending formal schooling – by reason for not attending (UNICEF 2015b, p.58).



Almost half of school aged children with disabilities who were not attending formal school were found to have had dropped out at some point during 2011, after which drop-out rates had steadily reduced. In 2012 and 2013, a slight pickup was seen in the second quarter, which saw the highest proportion of dropouts in both years (see Figure 12 below) (UNICEF 2015b).

Figure 12 - Drop-out rates - children with disability in formal education (UNICEF 2015b, p.58).



## Health

63 percent of refugees with disabilities received either surgical treatment, rehabilitation, or psychological support of assistive devices in Jordan. Nearly 20,000 refugees attended consultations for mental health disorders in 2014.

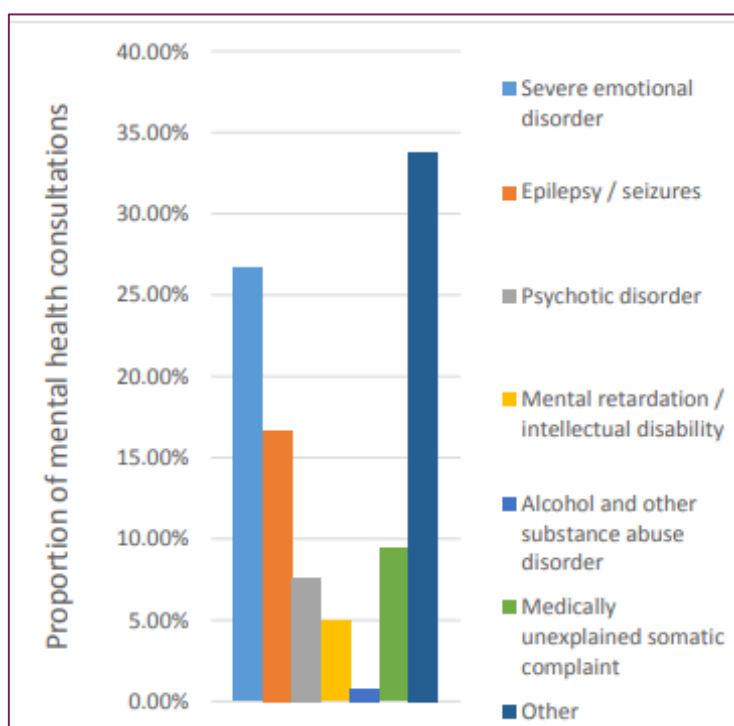
Jordan has freely extended Social Health Insurance to persons with disabilities. Coverage should in theory be 100 percent, yet around a third of Jordanians with disabilities are not covered (ESCWA 2017). In Jordan, almost all of the 225 Makani Medical Centers are physically accessible and their staff are trained to address the needs of persons with disabilities. However, challenges around transportation limits the number of beneficiaries with disabilities each centre assists (Curtis & Geagan 2016). Data is lacking from subsectors within the field of health. For example, there are no national studies of the dental needs of individuals with disabilities in Jordan (Al-Zboon & Hatmal 2016).

With regards to the Syrian refugee population in Jordan, the number of people with a disability due to injuries from the Syrian conflict is believed to be significant. The conflict has undoubtedly increased the prevalence of physical and psychological disability. The psychological traumas resulting from the conflict have caused mental health problems for many Syrian refugees in Jordan. It is challenging to quantify the increase in disability prevalence due to differences by each country in measuring the disability prevalence rates. Data from Ramtha hospital suggests that 90 percent of the Syrian patients admitted required physiotherapy after major surgery in addition to strong-post operative care and counselling. However, UNHCR data suggests that only 63 percent of Syrian refugees with disabilities had received either surgical treatment, rehabilitation, or psychological support of assistive devices in Jordan. The data that exists suggests that there is unmet demand for health services from refugees with disabilities in Jordan (Amnesty International 2016). The UNHCR (2013) Jordan Response Plan reported that 394 persons with specific needs, including disabilities, received rehabilitation services in the first three months of 2013. Of the 394 persons, 80 were located in urban areas. This highlights the challenge of capacity to decentralise services and reach vulnerable refugees settled throughout Jordan.

UNHCR may not be identifying all refugees with visual impairments in Jordan. While undertaking an investigation into refugees in Jordan, Crock et al (2015) noted an absence of people with vision impairments. Some vision testing of refugees is known to be taking place within camps in Jordan. However, a general lack of assistance for people with visual impairment was reported, with the suggestion that donors may favour addressing severe or urgent medical conditions, leaving those with long-term, non-life-threatening conditions with unmet needs.

Seven percent of surveyed refugees suffering from non-communicable diseases also have an impairment (HelpAge & HI 2014). Mental health is a concern for refugees in Jordan. 19,511 consultations for mental health disorders were reported in 2014 in the Za'atari camp alone. Of these, 17 percent were for epilepsy/seizures, 27 percent for severe emotional disorder and 8 percent for psychotic disorder). A breakdown of the mental health conditions within Za'atari camp are shown in the figure below (Health Sector Working Group 2015).

*Figure 13 - Mental health conditions in Jordan (Za'atari camp), January – December 2014 (Health Sector Working Group 2015 p.7).*



## WASH

Nationally, of the 746 schools in Jordan that have students with a disability, only 416 (11 percent) have a universal-design latrine. In Irbid, Ma'an, Mafraq, Zarqa, and Amman, of the 151 schools that have students with a disability, only 83 (55 percent) had latrines that children with disabilities could access. An estimated 250,000 refugees living in host communities (36 percent of non-camp refugees) have an inadequate water supply or hygiene services.



Limited data on WASH with regards to persons with disability in Jordan could be found. UNICEF (2014c) report that barriers including the physical infrastructure of schools and bathrooms for children with disabilities have been identified. Of 474 schools assessed in Irbid, Ma'an, Mafraq, Zarqa, and Amman, 151 school were found to have disabled students. 83 had latrines that children with disabilities could access (UNICEF 2014c). UNICEF (2017) reported that nationally, 746 schools (19 percent) accommodate students with special needs, but of these, only 416 (11 percent) have a universal-design latrine for students with disabilities.

The rising number of Syrian refugee students in schools is increasing the pressure on school infrastructure. The UNHCR (2013) report that an estimated 300,000 refugees in camps require their WASH needs to be considered as a matter of priority. An estimated 250,000 refugees (36 percent of non-camp refugees) in host communities also require improved water supply, hygiene services and interventions to improve water conservation. The Jordan Response Plan recognises that priority must go to vulnerable households (including households with disabled persons), although no estimation is provided for how many such households exist.

WASH facilities in Za'atari camp are basic, with a ratio of 1 toilet per 50 people. Efforts are made to ensure WASH facilities are accessible, but this has not always been possible (UNICEF 2013b). The 2015 Joint Education Needs Assessment Report for education recommended that improving WASH facilities would allow more children with disabilities to attend school (UNICEF 2015b).

## Social protection

12,000 people with disabilities currently receive assistance from the National Aid Fund, equating to 12 percent of the total budget. In addition, the Handicapped Affairs programme provides support to 4,000 persons with disabilities.

According to ESCWA (2017), there are various social protection schemes in place in Jordan. For example, old-age pensioners with a person with a disability in their family may be eligible for a dependent's supplement. This amounts to 12 percent of the pension. In addition, under the Handicapped Care Cash Assistance scheme, regular payments may be made to families that consistently care for a disabled family member suffering from a chronic mental illness (ESCWA 2017, Röth, Nimeh & Hagen-Zanker 2017). As many as 7,100 families benefited from the scheme by way of unconditional cash transfer in 2010 (ESCWA 2017). Zureiqat and Abu Shama (2015) report that among the various social safety nets implemented by the Jordanian Ministry of Social Development, the Handicapped Affairs programme provides and supervises care, rehabilitation, and diagnostic centres and shelters to 4,000 persons with disabilities. The budget is 8.9 JD million. This programme is only targeted at Jordanians, but in certain situations, refugees can access it, for example, if women or children have been subject to abuse. In 2013, 7 percent of abuse cases that were reported involved Syrian refugees (Röth, Nimeh & Hagen-Zanker 2017).

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2007 includes the right of persons with disabilities to receive support services to achieve integration and participation. This includes monthly assistance to persons with disabilities in accordance with the National Assistance Fund Act (UN 2015). The Ministry for Social Development which administers the National Aid Fund, currently deals with 12,000 cases of people with disabilities (Jordan Times 2015a, ESCWA 2017). This corresponds to approximately 12 percent of all National Aid Fund beneficiaries (ESCWA 2017).

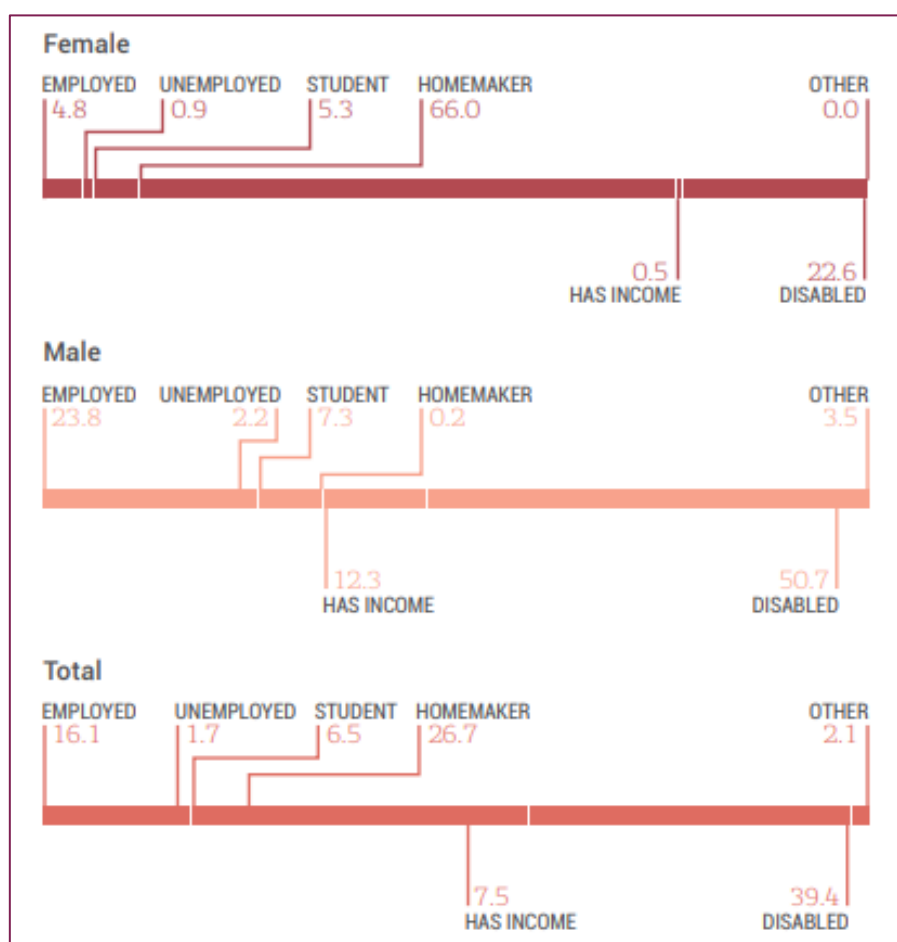
Refugees are not eligible for cash assistance from the National Aid Fund (Röth, Nimeh & Hagen-Zanker 2017). The Social Development Minister Reem Abu Hassan has called for the establishment of a specific national fund to focus on the needs of persons with disabilities (Jordan Times 2015a).

## Employment/jobs

The employment rate among men without disabilities is 61.4 percent, compared to 32.8 percent for men with disabilities. The employment rate for women without disabilities is 13.5 percent compared to 5.2 percent for women with disabilities.

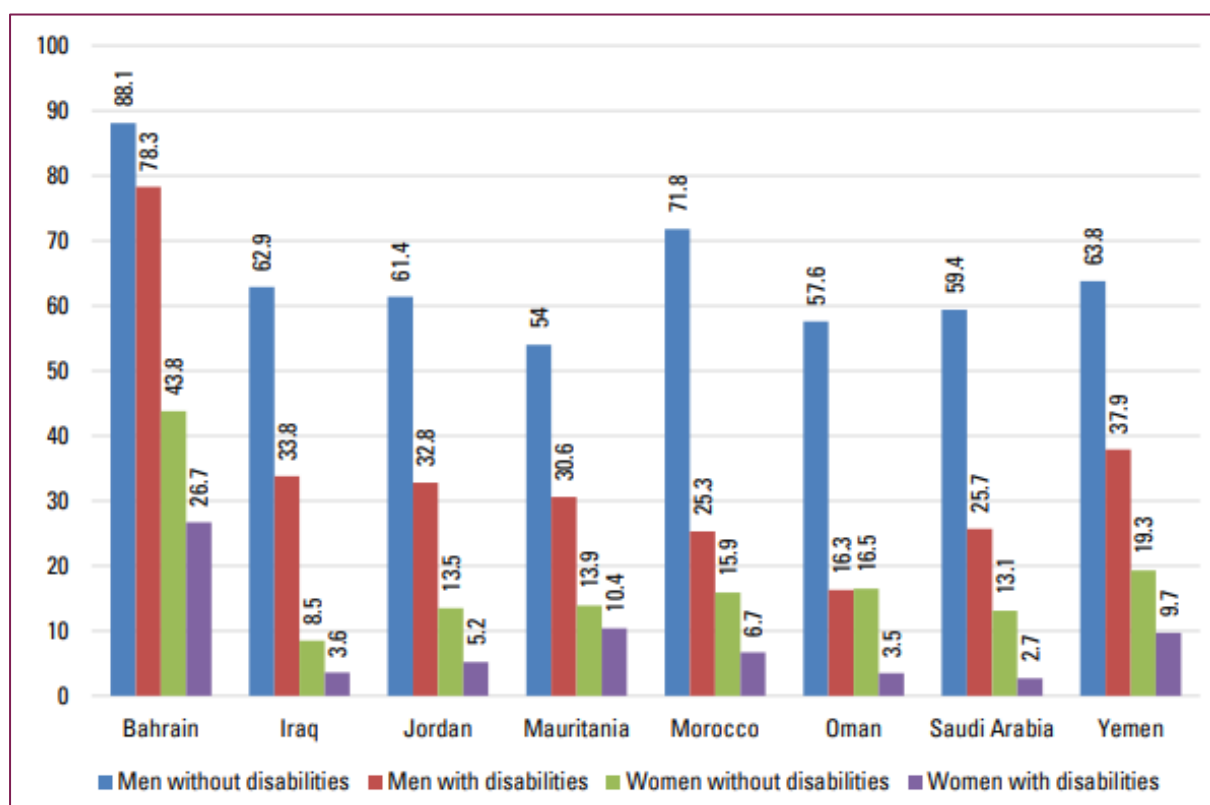
In 2014 in Jordan, 16.1 percent of persons with disabilities were employed, 1.7 percent were unemployed and 82.2 percent were not economically active. By way of comparison to the total population of Jordan, 36.6 percent were employed, 4.4 percent were unemployed and 59 percent were reported as not being economically active. Only 4.8 percent of women with disabilities were employed, compared to 23.8 percent of men with disabilities. Further details on the economic activity of persons with disability are displayed in the figure below (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014).

Figure 14 – Economic activity (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014 p.49).



According to the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities, in 2015, 9.9 percent of people with disabilities aged 15 and above in Jordan were unemployed but actively looking for jobs, while those working constituted 7.7 percent (Jordan Times 2015b). By 2017, ESCWA (2017) reported that when focusing on people of working age (15-64 years old), the employment rate among men without disabilities was 61.4 percent, compared to 32.8 percent for men with disabilities. The employment rate for women without disabilities was 13.5 percent and only 5.2 percent for women with disabilities.

*Figure 15 - Employment rate among persons with and without disabilities aged 15-64 (percentage) (ESCWA 2017 p. 14).*



In 2017 it was reported that the employment rate for persons with disability was lower than 1.0 percent in the public sector and 0.5 percent in the private sector (Information and Research Center et al 2017).

## Gender

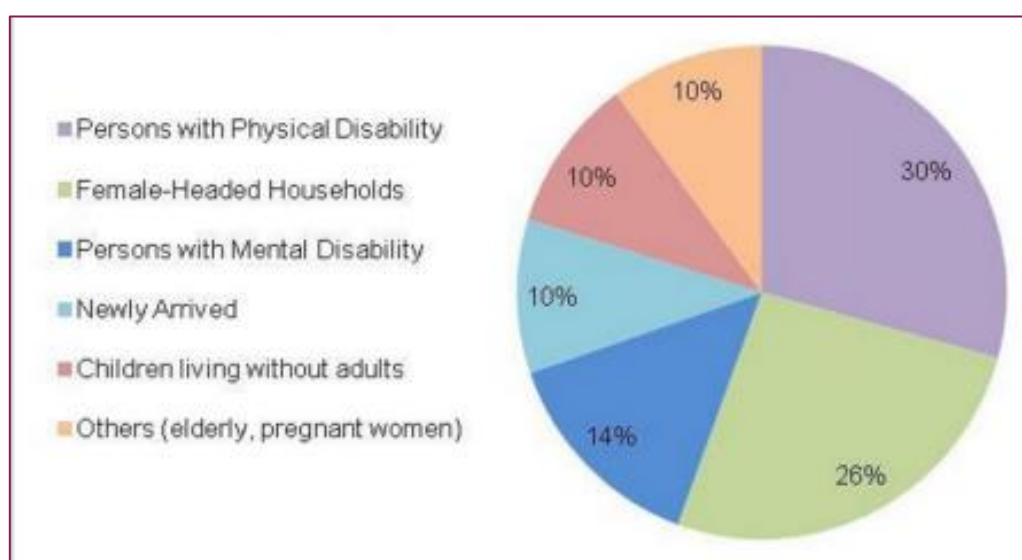
More males in Jordan have disabilities (59 percent) compared to females (41 percent). A similar number of males and females with disabilities have been married (58.7 and 59.5 percent). Similar numbers of men and women with disabilities live in urban areas (82.6 and 85.8 percent). Half of the children with disabilities enrolled in formal education are female, but 40 percent of females with disabilities are illiterate compared to 32 percent of males with disabilities.

In 2010 the disability prevalence rate in Jordan was 1.9 percent, with 41 percent of persons with disabilities were female and 59 percent were male. Marginally more females with disabilities (59.5 percent) had been married compared to males with disabilities (58.7 percent). 85.8 percent of women with disabilities live in urban areas compared to 82.6 percent of men with disabilities (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014).

Of the 7,239 students with disabilities enrolled in formal education in 2011, roughly half (49.7 percent) were female (UN 2015). However, in terms of literacy, 40 percent of females with disabilities were found to be illiterate, compared to 32 percent of males with disabilities. At all levels, educational attainment favours men with disabilities, compared to women with disabilities (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014).

A report by UNICEF (2013b) that focused on the challenges and priorities for Syrian children and women in Jordan found that the lack of gender-disaggregated services a barrier to accessing services by a minority of Syrian girls and women. Denial of permission by family members and the distance to services were other barriers. Female-headed households and persons with mental or physical disabilities were considered the groups most excluded from accessing services in Za'atari camp (see Figure 16 below)

*Figure 16 – Groups of people most excluded from services (UNICEF 2013b P.14)*



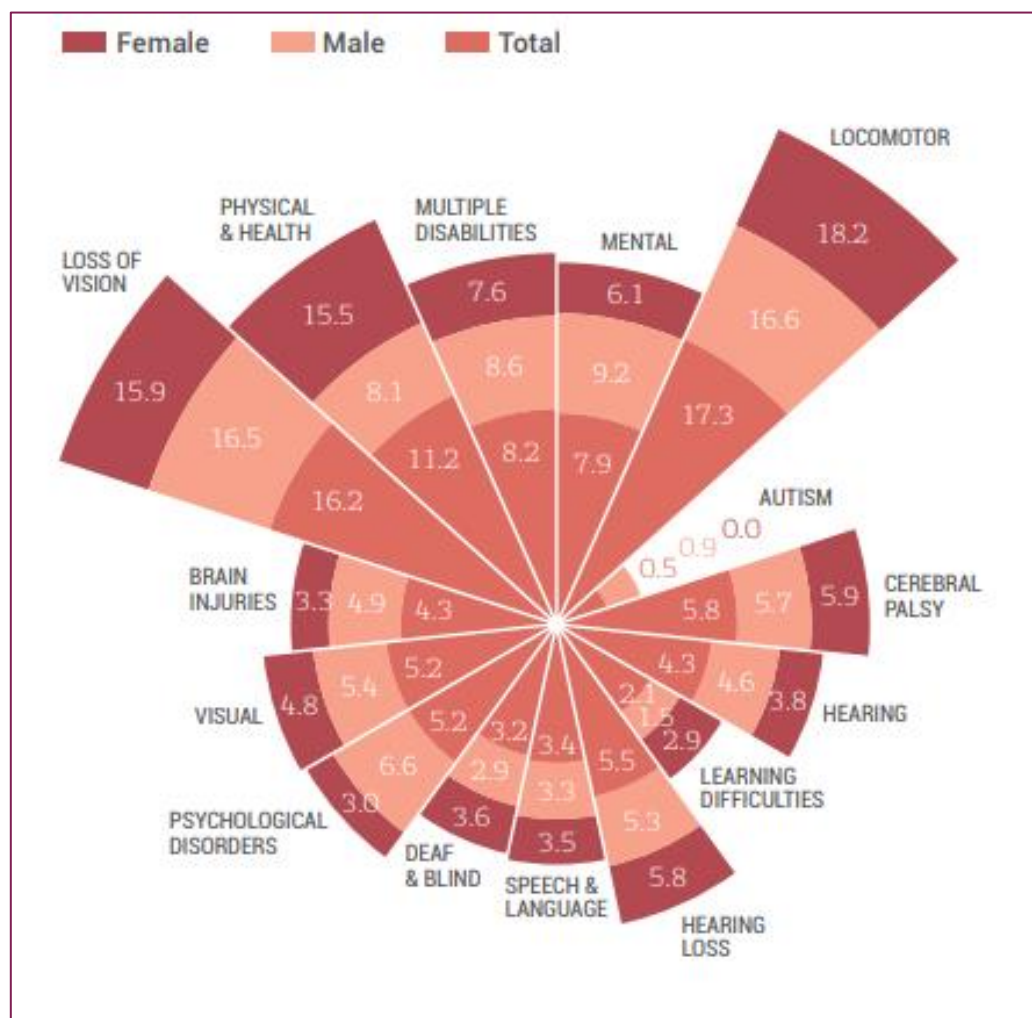
## Causes of disability

The leading type of disability is locomotor disability, representing 17.3 percent of all types of disability. For refugees, 44.2 percent of impairments were found to be physical, 42.5 percent were sensory and 13.4 percent were intellectual. One in five refugees suffered multiple impairments.

Locomotor disability was the leading type of disability in Jordan, representing 17.3 percent. Locomotor disability was recorded for 18.2 percent of females with disabilities and 16.6 percent of males. The second leading type of disability was loss of vision (16.2 percent). Loss of vision was recorded for 15.9 percent of females and 16.5 percent of males. All the types of disability reported are displayed in the figure below (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014). One of the

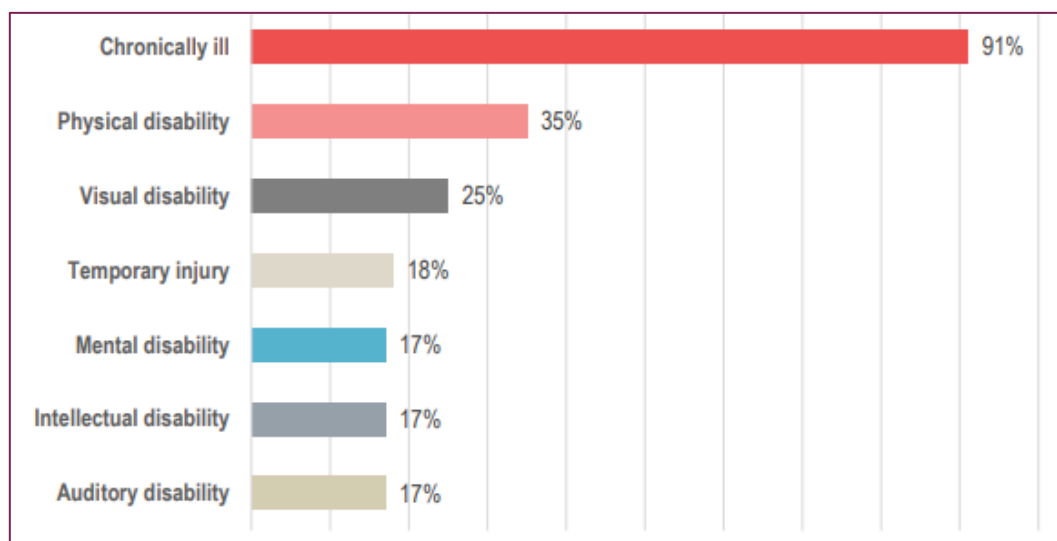
most common disabilities in Jordan is thought to be intellectual disabilities (Al-Zboon & Hatmal 2016).

Figure 17 - Type of disability/difficulty (percentage) (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014 P.48)



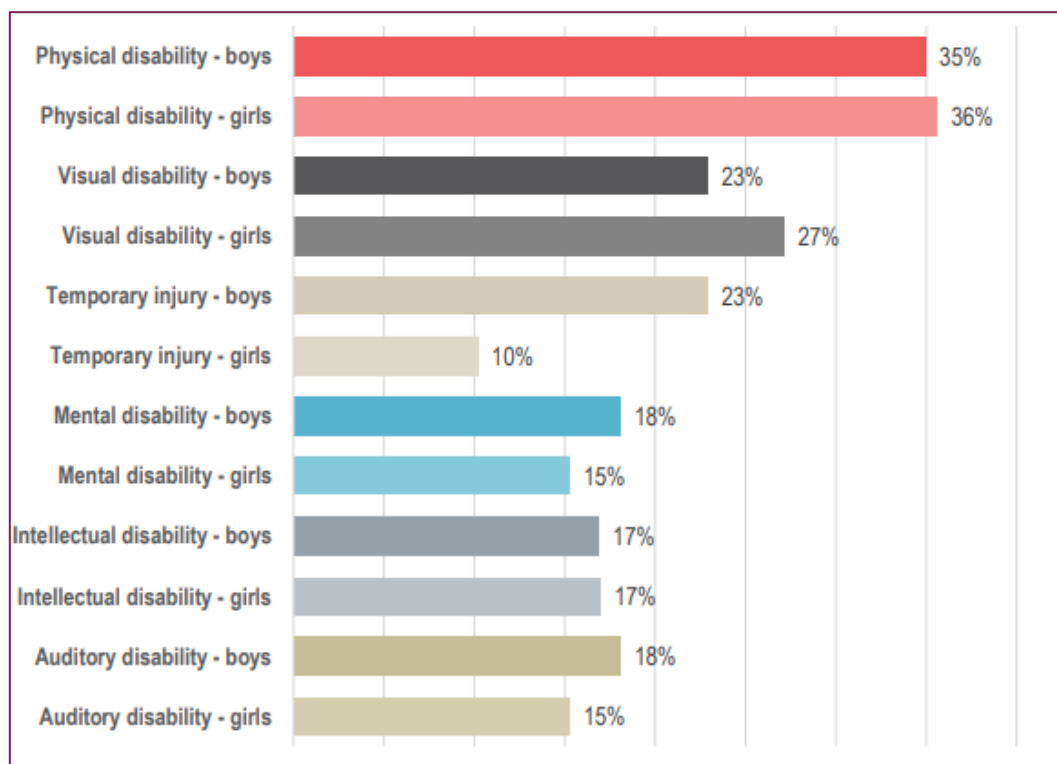
An estimated 22 percent of refugees in Jordan and Lebanon were found to have an impairment. Of these, 44.2 percent of impairments were physical, while 42.5 percent were sensory and 13.4 percent were intellectual. One in five refugees with an impairment are affected by more than one impairment (HelpAge & HI 2014). The 2015 Joint Education Needs Assessment Report found that the most common disabilities in school age children were physical disabilities (36 percent of total disabilities), followed by visual disabilities (25 percent) and mental disabilities (19 percent) (UNICEF 2015b). Based on data from the Joint Education Needs Assessment 2015, the following table indicates disability type amongst school aged children with reported disabilities.

Figure 18 - Disability type among school aged children with reported disabilities (UNICEF 2015, p.55)



Using the same dataset, the figure below illustrates children with disabilities desegregated by gender. The sample size of school aged children with disabilities was too low (n=268, 155 boys and 113 girls) to draw statistically significant conclusions, so findings should only be considered indicative.

Figure 19 - Disability type among school aged children with reported disabilities by gender (UNICEF 2015, p.55)





### 3. The social and cultural and economic context for PWDs

#### Norms and behaviours

In Jordan progress has been made on increasing the visibility of people with disabilities. There is a genuine political will to address disability related issues. Despite national legislation affirming the inclusivity, negative attitudes continue to exclude persons with disabilities. Women with disabilities face greater discrimination than males. Refugees with disabilities also face discrimination. Refugee children face both physical and attitudinal obstacles restricting their access to education.

Buchy et al (2017) report that in Jordan there is a genuine political will at the highest levels to improve data quality, with regards to disability related issues. This political will has resulted in progress being made on increasing the visibility of people with disabilities (for example, in 2013 Jordan hosted a meeting between the Washington Group on Disability Statistics in Amman, which resulted in the Washington Group questions being included in the 2015 census). Despite national legislation existing in Jordan affirming the rights of individuals with disabilities to be included in society, attitudes of communities may exclude individuals with disabilities from functioning as members of the community (Al-Zboon & Hatmal 2016). The majority of people with disabilities face discrimination and face a lack of accessibility in public places, schools, universities, and streets (Jordan Times 2015a). Jalal and Gabel (2014) contend that both men and women with disabilities are marginalised, prejudged, and discriminated against in Jordan, but women with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse and more stigmatised than their male counterparts. Impairment is often synonymous with disability. It is considered that it causes shame that might extend to the entire family (Jalal and Gabel 2014). With regards to education, children with disabilities face many barriers, including attitudinal barriers with parents (UNICEF 2015b). Despite these negative attitudes, there are also examples of positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities. For example, a study in Jordan assessed the views and attitudes of fifty-four dentists towards persons with intellectual disabilities. Highly positive attitudes toward persons with intellectual disabilities were recorded. Years of experiences or gender of the dentists were found to have no significant effect on these attitudes (Al-Zboon & Hatmal 2016).

Concerning Syrian refugees with disabilities in Jordan, Crock et al (2015) reported they might face discrimination, for example when using public transport. While positive steps have been taken to ensure that refugees with disabilities are assisted and accommodated, some significant challenges clearly remain. Analysis focusing on persons with disabilities and their families in an International Rescue Committee Women's Protection and Empowerment (WPE) programme in Jordan found that men with disabilities are often ridiculed by other men in the community (Pearce 2015). Culbertson et al (2016) reported that stigma, lack of transport, concern over physical punishment, lack of specialised resources were all barriers to refugees with disabilities accessing education in Jordan. Evidence from Handicap International show that one of the reasons that children with disabilities do not go to school is due to attitudinal barriers. Families fears that other children will not accept a child with disabilities (UNICEF 2013a). Physical and attitudinal obstacles restrict the enrolment of Syrian refugee children with disabilities in school in Jordan. Inclusive education is vital for this group, but identification of needs remains a challenge. Further research focusing on identification and vulnerabilities in Jordan is needed (UNICEF 2013c). The UNHCR (2013) recognises that Syrian refugees with disabilities require specialised services to



address specific needs. The delivery of such services was included as a priority in the UNHCR Jordan Response Plan.

## Cultural issues

Jordan has received international recognition for its commitment to promoting disability rights. However, stigmatisation of persons with disabilities continues at the societal level. Historically disability in Arab culture has been associated with shame. Disability is commonly associated with visible physical impairment. A lack of understanding of the abilities of people with disabilities results in social discrimination. Some evidence indicates that more positive beliefs about disabilities are being adopted.

Jordan has a tradition of openness and generosity. The Jordan Royal family has leveraged these cultural traits to promote disability issues. The international community recognises Jordan's commitment to promoting disability rights. In 2005 this commitment was recognised when Jordan received the Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award. The award was justified by Jordan's approach to including persons with disabilities in the forefront of the national agenda and working to eliminating obstacles that lead to the exclusion of persons with disability from civil society. Jordan was the first Arab or Islamic state to receive the award (Rutherford 2014).

However, stigma surrounding disability is reported by Crock et al (2015) as a significant issue with cultural norms resulting in people with certain types of disabilities being hidden away. Al-Dababneh, Al-Zboon & Baibers (2017) contend that historically, many Arab societies harbour negative attitudes and beliefs towards disabilities, considering them as burdensome and shameful. Health-related stigma and lack of understanding of the abilities of people with disabilities can result in children with disabilities facing unrealistic beliefs and social discrimination. Social stigma still prevails in societies in Arab countries and has negative effects on children with disabilities and their families. However, recent evidence from many Arab countries, including Jordan, indicates that more positive beliefs about disabilities are being adopted (Al-Zboon & Baibers 2017). This change of attitude, in tandem with intervention programmes being developed and national laws passed are resulting in persons with disabilities becoming more integrated into society. A study that aimed to identify beliefs in Jordan regarding the causes of these disabilities, and the ability of children with disability to make progress, found generally that disabilities were attributed to supernatural and biomedical causes (Al-Dababneh, Al-Zboon & Baibers 2017). Data were collected from 63 parents of children with disabilities. Most of the parents involved had positive expectations about their children's progress, especially with regards to education, and had hopes for their children's futures. The most frequently identified explanation among the participants was that disability was a case of God's will. Followers of Islam and Christianity believe in God and fate. A belief in God may help parents to develop positive beliefs about their children's abilities, which impact positively on the progress of the child (Al-Dababneh, Al-Zboon & Baibers 2017).

Jalal and Gabel (2014) contend that Jordanian culture traditionally portrays persons with disability as shameful, defective, dependent, abnormal, and stigmatised. In Jordan, the term disability is commonly used to only describe visible physical impairment. Visibility is an apparent important criterion for what constitutes disability. In cohesive societies, such as that of Jordan, visibility and stigma can have a more disabling impact than in heterogeneous societies, as the

values and perceptions of homogeneous societies do not adjust to change and difference as readily

## Economic context

16.1 percent of persons with disabilities in Jordan are employed, 1.7 percent are unemployed and 82.2 percent are not economically active. These employment rates differ greatly compared to the national average of 36.6 percent, 4.4 percent and 59 percent correspondingly. Efforts have been made to improve employment opportunities of persons with disability, including tax incentives, employment opportunities within the public sector and improved training (although some of the training initiatives have been found to be inadequate). A quota system to increase the number of persons with disabilities being employed is enshrined in law. With regards to refugees, they do not officially have the right to work, so many work informally to support themselves. Stigma may reduce opportunities. Women with disabilities may find it harder to find work than men with disabilities.

In Jordan, 16.1 percent of persons with disabilities are employed, 1.7 percent are unemployed and 82.2 percent are reported as being not economically active. In terms of the total population of Jordan (older than 15 years old), 36.6 percent are employed, 4.4 percent are unemployed and 59 percent are reported as not being economically active (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014). Jordanian society's lack of awareness about disabled people results in their marginalisation. They are often prevented from working (Jalal and Gabel 2014). Estimates indicate that the employment rate for persons with disability does not exceed 1.0 percent in the public sector and 0.5 percent in the private sector (Information and Research Center et al 2017). Although no time frame was provided, the Jordan Times (2015a) reported that the percentage of civil service job appointments for people with disabilities was raised from 6 to 10 percent.

Economic opportunities are reported to be being created for persons with disabilities in Jordan, as vocational training programmes are improved. In addition, various members of the royal family have leveraged their roles to improve equal opportunities and empower people with disabilities through employment training, job opportunities, and rights awareness. An enabling environment is being created in Jordan. For example, the strategy for persons with disabilities launched in 2007 aimed to reduce the unemployment rate among people with disabilities (Rutherford 2014). To improve higher education opportunities for persons with disabilities, exemptions are now available that cover 90 percent of registration fees at universities. Also, admission rules have been amended to ensure higher education is available to persons with disabilities (Jordan Times 2015a).

Jordan's Law No. 31 on the Rights of Disabled Persons (2007), Article 4/3 states that one person with disability must be employed by each employer (from either the public or private sector) that employ between 25 and 50 people. For employers who have a staff of more than 50 people, four percent of their jobs must be given to persons with disabilities (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014, UN 2015).

Although in many cases people with disabilities are employed in positions appropriate to their qualifications and experience, there are cases where they are not. In some cases wages for persons with disabilities are lower than those of people who do not have disabilities. Vocational training institutions are delivering capacity-building programmes for persons with disabilities. However, uptake remains low because some training centres do not have appropriate

environmental facilities. Only nine of 42 training centres are deemed adequate. In Jordan, customs and tax facilities are in place to enable persons with disabilities to obtain the equipment and services they require. Tax exemptions are available for institutions for persons with disabilities. Despite the many development programmes that are aimed to improve the productivity of their workers, people with disabilities do not enjoy equal opportunities for training and professional development. This is reportedly due to the prevailing culture and a lack of facilitated training in the work environment (UN 2015).

A report into Syrian refugees with disabilities in Jordan found that in urban settings, refugees with disabilities all seem to receive some support from government and UNHCR. However, the level of support is often barely sufficient to survive and there is no way to supplement the meagre income. Syrian refugees in Jordan do not officially have the right to work. Refugees engage in unauthorised work to support themselves. As the work is unregulated, it may entail exploitative and dangerous working conditions. Those who have injuries or physical impairments may find it difficult to earn an income when the job market is centred on labour-based activities. Stigma against persons with disabilities may also reduce the chances of someone with disabilities finding work (Crock et al 2015).

School age refugee boys in Jordan are more likely to be involved in work if their fathers are dead, disabled or absent. In such circumstances, families depend on boys to earn money to support them, as well as procuring supplies. Child labour of this kind discourages attendance in school. Although in these situations the child does not have a disability, a family member having a disability can have an impact on their economic situation (Culbertson et al 2016). In these circumstances, boys were expected to “take over the household” and provide an income for the family (UNICEF 2015b). Handicap International highlighted that one reason for the non-attendance at school for children with disabilities is that the child prefers to work (UNICEF 2013a).

According to the Health Sector Working Group (2015), based on data from HelpAge and HI from 2014, 8 percent of refugees in Jordan have a significant injury of which 90 percent were conflict-related. Men accounted for 72 percent of the injured persons with the highest proportion of injuries found amongst those aged 30 to 60 years. The high proportion of injuries suffered by men of productive age increases the vulnerability of entire households. In Jordanian culture, men with disabilities are often ridiculed if, as a result of their disability, they could not work and provide income for their family. The inability to work in humanitarian settings is often exacerbated for those with disabilities. This resulted in the perception among family and community members that men with disabilities who cannot work have no value (Pearce 2015).

Training or income generation programmes that are available to refugees are not always accessible to refugees with disabilities. Some international organisations have a policy of hiring refugees with disabilities or including them in voluntary activities, but this is not widespread. Curtis and Geagan (2016) found that in Jordan, none of the service providers interviewed were aware of any vocational training programme or livelihood programme targeting refugees with disabilities. Mercy Corps are the exception, as they have launched a livelihood programme targeting persons with disabilities. Regardless of the existence of such programmes, some families would not allow women with disabilities to work due to fears of abuse and exploitation. Writing on disability and gender in Jordan, Jalal and Gabel (2014) argue that disabled women are more often deprived of equal education and equal employment opportunities than disabled men.

## Gender equality and women's empowerment

The Jordanian Constitution establishes the principle of gender equality, which is affirmed by The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act. However, Arabic society is traditionally patriarchal. The status of women, combined with historical stigmatisation of disability, results in women with disabilities suffering discrimination in many sectors including employment, relationships and education. Poor women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable. If there are multiple persons with disabilities within a household, males with disabilities take priority. Women with disabilities may face barriers to accessing services.

Jordanian women with disabilities suffer from discrimination and difficulty in employment, marriage and education. Their participation in the labour force is narrow. Vocational training courses aimed at women were found to be too traditional and of low value. The percentage of women with disabilities in higher education was found to be lower than the equivalent rate of men with disabilities. In the broader Arab region, if there is more than one individual with disability in same family, a male with disability is likely to take priority in various ways, including accessing school and assistive technology (Al-Zboon & Smadi 2015). Several awareness campaigns have been launched in Jordan to define and reduce violations of rights, including a campaign to prohibit and criminalise the sterilisation of girls with mental disabilities (UN 2015).

The Jordanian Constitution establishes the principle of equality between women and men, which is affirmed by The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act. The principle of gender equality is adhered to by various policies, including the National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities and the National Strategy for Women. Despite the increased awareness of gender challenges, discrimination continues in the judiciary, the media, education, health and the environment sector. Citizenship and employment rights are still lacking for women. Also, for cultural reasons, women with disabilities suffer discrimination in accessing equal rights as men currently have guardianship over them. The economic and social discrimination suffered by women with disabilities affects their families. Poor women with disabilities suffer greater discrimination than others (UN 2015).

Women with disabilities in Jordan experience discrimination due to contextual factors, such as traditions and observances restricting the opportunity to marry. Suspicion about hereditary causes of disability and embedded social standards exacerbate the problem. Jordanian society prioritises the employment of men. Restrictions on women are deeply rooted in the cultural and social contexts where they were raised. For these reasons, women with disabilities suffer from lack of services, opportunities and services provided. Self-determination and decision-making ability is low among women with disabilities in Jordan (Al-Zboon & Smadi 2015).

A study by Jalal and Gabel (2014) focused on physical disability and gender in Jordan by drawing on the experiences and perspectives of three Jordanian men with physical disabilities. They draw on the existing literature to explain how people with disabilities are often stereotyped and stigmatised as asexual. People with physical impairments are among the most stigmatised because of the visibility of their disability. Disabled women are found to be more discriminated against than men, as they are subject to multiple layers of stigma. Disabled women are also less likely to marry and those that do are twice as likely to be divorced. This appears contradictory to the findings of ESCWA/League of Arab States (2014), who report that slightly more females with disabilities (59.5 percent) had been married compared to males with disabilities (58.7 percent).

Arabic society is patriarchal and women with disabilities in Islamic countries have a low status. Women with disabilities in the Middle East seldom participate in making decisions about their lives. They are often neglected or absent from domestic policies and the agendas of national and international agencies. Women with disabilities in the Middle East do not have a strong presence in neither the women's movement nor the disability movement. The fundamental beliefs about women in Arab countries are that they are housekeepers, wives, and mothers (Jalal and Gabel 2014).

## Social cohesion

Jordan's history has resulted in an 'open door' policy to all Arabs, leading to a diversified Arab society. This, along with the relative peace, has resulted in many refugees coming to Jordan. However, social attitudes towards persons with disabilities, suggests some barriers to inclusive societies still exist. Some people with disabilities may be hidden away from society, due to shame or stigma. Refugees with disabilities may face a double burden of discrimination.

Jordan was created from the Arab Revolt (1916-1918). As a result of the Revolt, Jordan adopted the position that all Arabs are welcome, creating a melting pot of people and ideas. This openness has resulted in Jordan becoming a haven for refugees, creating a diverse society and a tolerance for foreign ideas and traditions. It is common for Jordanians to marry foreigners, furthering diversity. This policy, along with the relative peace in Jordan, promoted by Jordan's royal family, has greatly benefited people with disabilities. While Jordan is known for its security and stability, instability in the region has made it challenging to deliver solid reforms (Rutherford 2014). Also, despite specific national legislation existing to assure inclusion of individuals with disabilities, social inclusion of these individuals may not be realised due to attitudes of communities excluding them from functioning as members of the community (Al-Zboon & Hatmal 2016).

Refugees with disabilities in Jordan are found to face many potential barriers to inclusion in community and family life. Refugees may be poor and live in cheaper housing that is located on higher levels of buildings or on hills. The physical inaccessibility of buildings and neighbourhoods is an obstacle to societal participation. In addition to the physical challenges, refugees with disabilities may face discrimination from the public. A particularly significant issue in Jordan that reduces social cohesion is the stigma surrounding disability. Cultural issues may result in people with certain types of disabilities being hidden away. Communication barriers are another challenge for those with hearing or speech impairments, and sometimes those with mental disabilities. Refugees with disabilities may face a heightened risk of exclusion while living in Jordan (Crock et al 2015). Also, border restrictions have resulted in families being split, leaving Syrian refugees with disabilities who may require care isolated and without the support of their family members (Amnesty International 2016).

## Impact of conflict on PWDs (to include mental health and psycho-social needs)

While there is legislation and procedures in place to address the needs of persons with disability if conflict should arise, challenges remain. The Syrian crisis is having a significant impact on Jordan. As its severity increases, the number of persons with disabilities seeking



refugee in Jordan, will also increase. Many issues have arisen. Mobility is a major problem and specialist health and rehabilitation services are currently inadequate. A study of 7,964 refugees found between 15.1 and 38.1 percent of respondents reported various mental health symptoms. 13 percent reported a need for counselling or psychological support services. Another study of 361 refugees injured due to explosive weapons reported that 80 percent were highly psychologically distressed.

The right of civilians to safety, health and protection from danger and threats are laid out in the Civil Defence Act and the amendments thereto, the Military Criminal Code, Law No. 58 of 2006, and the Hashemite Commission for Military Casualties Act and the amendments thereto, Law No. 13 of 2008. In the event of a crisis the national civil defence agencies will cooperate with international relief organisations and the relevant bodies to provide protection, care and support to people at risk. The existing laws and policies suggest that the needs of persons with disabilities would be prioritised in a time of crisis. In terms of external conflict, as a response to the multiple and frequent armed conflicts in neighbouring countries, specialised relief agencies have been founded in Jordan, such as the Hashemite Charitable Organization, to respond to the needs of victims inside and outside their countries and to provide refugees and displaced persons fleeing from conflict zones with protection, care and services commensurate with their needs. The priorities taken into account include the specificity and needs of persons with disabilities (UN 2015).

The Syrian crisis is having a significant impact on Jordan. The UNHCR (2013) reported that as the conflict in Syria continues and its severity increases, the number of persons with disabilities seeking refuge in Jordan, will also increase. The influx of refugees who have disabilities related to the conflict creates a number of challenges. For example, issues with mobility are a major problem (Crock et al 2015). Some of the persons with disabilities who were injured in conflict require specific health interventions while others require more accessible services, which are not available to them in Jordan. For example, the majority of war-wounded require rehabilitation after surgery, with over 90 percent of the patients admitted into Ramtha hospital for example, requiring physiotherapy after major surgery in addition to strong post-operative care and counselling. Some of the needs such as long-term care for spinal cord injuries are unavailable in the Jordanian national public health system and are not provided by non-government organisations either. Médecins Sans Frontières, for example, have stated that they do “not have the capacity to address the specific long-term and permanent needs of war-wounded with spinal injuries” including those with tetraplegia or paraplegia. Evidence shows that early intervention in the form of specialised care through a dedicated team in a general hospital or via a mobile outreach team has led to better outcomes for people with spinal cord injuries compared to non-specialised. Jordan’s policy of separating families also has the consequence of leaving the war-wounded without a carer to assist them in accessing services (Amnesty International 2016).

In Jordan, where possible, surgery for conflict-related injuries is being provided, which is reported to be the reason for some people fleeing there. Unofficial Syrian-run groups formed to address the needs for more long-term recovery. However, the government keeps shutting down these groups, due to fears of links with Syrian militant groups. There is concern that unregistered or unqualified doctors may be attending to refugees with disabilities. The quality of assistive aids including prosthetic limbs provided cannot be guaranteed (Crock et al 2015).

According to the Health Sector Working Group (2015) for Jordan, the significant prevalence of disability amongst Syrian refugees in Jordan can in part be explained by the large numbers

affected by war-related injuries and specific medical and rehabilitation services are currently inadequate. According to data from HelpAge and HI from 2014, eight percent of refugees in Jordan have a significant injury of which 90 percent were conflict-related.

To assess the mental health of Syrian refugees in Jordan, WHO et al (2014) collected data on 1,811 families, representing 7,964 individuals. Focusing on present mental health symptoms 15.1 percent of respondents felt so afraid that nothing could calm them down, 28.4 percent felt so angry that nothing could calm them down, 25.6 percent felt so uninterested in things that they used to like, 26.3 percent felt so hopeless that they did not want to carry on living, and 38.1 percent felt so severely upset about the conflict that they tried to avoid places, people, conversations or activities that reminded them of such events. 18.8 percent felt unable to carry out essential activities for daily living because of feelings of fear, anger, fatigue, disinterest, hopelessness or upset. These figures represent average responses for both camp and non-camp settings. Strategies used by the Syrian refugees to cope with the situation included doing nothing (41 percent), socialising (15 percent), praying (13 percent), fighting or getting angry (11 percent), crying (6 percent), walking out (5 percent), sleeping (5 percent) and smoking (3 percent). A need for counselling or psychological support services was reported by 13 percent of respondents.

In a study of Syrian refugees in Jordan, Handicap International (2016) reported that of the 361 participants injured due to explosive weapons, 80 percent expressed at least one sign of high psychological distress.

## Gender based violence

Disabled women are vulnerable and experience stigmatisation in Jordan, with many suffering gender based violence (GBV). Female refugees who are disabled suffer GBV in their displaced communities. Sexual violence was the most common type of GBV experienced, followed by emotional violence and exploitation. GBV services are limited and awareness of them is low. Where services do exist, they may be unequal and exploitative. The wives of men with disabilities were reported as particularly affected by GBV. Men and boys with intellectual disabilities are also at risk of sexual violence.

GBV services in Jordan are limited and women's awareness of where to access these services is low. UNICEF (2013c) draws on anecdotal evidence that suggests unequal and exploitative treatment in service provision. Women and people with disabilities were found to be particularly vulnerable.

Both disabled men and women are marginalised, prejudged, and discriminated against in Jordan. However, disabled women are more vulnerable to abuse and more stigmatised than disabled men (Jalal and Gabel 2014). Pearce (2015) undertook an analysis of GBV programming in humanitarian settings including Jordan. They found that persons with disabilities, caregivers and community leaders reported that persons with disabilities experienced GBV in their displaced communities, and that women and girls with disabilities and female caregivers were perceived to be most at risk. The most common type of GBV reported was sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault, followed by emotional violence and exploitation. In Jordan, sexual abuse perpetrated by strangers against adolescent boys and girls with intellectual disabilities was reported. Some caregivers of young persons with disabilities locked them inside the home to protect them from further violence. In urban centres in Jordan, sexual harassment and exploitation by male community members was the most common type of sexual violence



reported. The wives of men with disabilities were reported as particularly affected, as they moved around the community unaccompanied by a male, which was not considered appropriate behaviour. Women with disabilities and female caregivers also testified to experiencing sexual, physical and emotional violence perpetrated by their intimate partners. Participants living in both urban and rural settings in Jordan reported sexual violence, including rape, against men and boys with disabilities, though to a much lesser extent than for women and girls. Men and boys with intellectual disabilities were found to be at risk of sexual violence. Emotional and physical violence perpetrated by caregivers against persons with disabilities was reported and observed in Jordan by Pearce (2015). The verbal abuse observed was largely based on expectations about how the individual with a disability should behave and/or the role expected of them as men or women. New displacement contexts, such as Jordan, results in weakened traditional community support structures and protection mechanisms, as families and neighbours are separated. This increases the risk of violence for persons with disabilities (Pearce 2015).

## Other social issues particular to Jordan

Jordan plays a leading international and regional role in alleviating suffering and protecting the rights of people with disabilities. Rutherford (2014) argues that three main factors have contributed to Jordan's success in disability rights. These are an enlightened royal family, a national tradition of openness and generosity, and one of the best educational systems in the Middle East.

## 4. Laws and protection of the rights of PWDs

### National disability relevant laws and policies for Jordan<sup>4</sup>

According to AlTarawneh et al (2017), the main laws in Jordan relating to the persons with disabilities are:

- **Law of Disabled people care – law number 12 - 1993.**
- **Law on the rights of persons with disabilities – law number 31 - 2007.**
- **Law on the rights of persons with disabilities – law number 20 – 2017**

ESCWA/League of Arab States (2014) analysed each country in the Arab region against several overarching institutional and legal frameworks. These included the existence of a national disability strategy or plan, an overarching or general disability law, articles on disability included in the constitution, focal points for disability in line ministries or other government institutions, direct involvement of persons with disabilities in the mechanism and national coordination mechanism for disability in the government. As shown in the figure below, Jordan has all of these institutional and legal frameworks in place, indicating its position as a regional leader for disability rights.

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<sup>4</sup> This report only used resources written in English. This section on laws relevant to disability in Jordan is limited, as Jordanian laws are posted in the Official Gazette in Arabic. The author has not seen copies of the relevant laws included in this section.

Figure 20 - Overarching institutional and legal frameworks for disability in the Arab region (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014 p.14)

	National disability strategy or plan	Overarching or general disability law	Articles on disability included in the constitution	Focal point(s) for disability in line ministries or other governmental institutions	Direct involvement of persons with disabilities in the mechanism	National coordination mechanism for disability in the government
ALGERIA	..	Y	Y	..	Y	Y
BAHRAIN	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
COMOROS	..	..	..	..	..	..
DJIBOUTI	..	..	..	..	..	..
EGYPT	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
IRAQ	N	Y	Y	Y	-	N
JORDAN	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
KUWAIT	..	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
LEBANON	CBD	Y	N	N	Y	Y
LIBYA	..	..	..	..	..	..
MAURITANIA	..	..	..	..	..	..
MOROCCO	Y	Y	Y	CBD	Y	Y
OMAN	CBD	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
PALESTINE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
QATAR	Y	Y	N	Y	-	N
SAUDI ARABIA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SOMALIA	..	..	..	..	..	..
SUDAN	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	..	..	..	..	..	..
TUNISIA	Y	Y	CBD	Y	Y	Y
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	N	Y	N	Y	-	N
YEMEN	CBD	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

## International disability relevant laws and policies for Jordan

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was ratified by Jordan on 31 March 2008. The implementation of the Convention by State Parties is monitored by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN 2015). Jordan participated in all the meetings related to the CRPD and was at the forefront of the 77 countries supporting the substantiation of the Convention (Rutherford 2014).

Jordan is not a States Party to the **UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees**. Despite the lack of a clear legal obligation, Jordan has received and continues to receive many

thousands of refugees from Syria and other countries. As of 2015 the local population in Jordan was almost outnumbered by Syrian refugees. Jordan provide services to refugees and allows those coming from Syria to remain indefinitely (Crock et al 2015).

## Brief history of disability relevant laws for Jordan

The year 1981 was declared as the International Year of the Disabled, prompting Jordan to deliver a major enhancement in services provided by the education, health, and public sectors. In 1989, a **Provisional Act for the Welfare of Disabled People** was passed. In 1993, the provisional bill was passed and the **Act for the Welfare of Disabled People** came into existence. This Act was reviewed and replaced by **The Disabled Individuals Rights Act** (Al-Zboon & Hatmal 2016, Curtis & Geagan 2016). Jordan was awarded the Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award in 2005. A key factor in achieving the award was Jordan passing disability legislation in 1993 that recognised that people with disabilities needed legal protections and social opportunities. In 2007, King Abdullah II announced a new strategy for persons with disabilities. The plan aimed to strengthen early detection and health awareness programmes, as well as establish more healthcare centres to service people with disabilities. The plan also aimed to reduce the unemployment rate among people with disabilities (Rutherford 2014).

Jordan ratified the CRPD in 2008 and was obliged to submit regular reports to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on how the rights were being implemented. The initial report from Jordan was received by the Committee in October 2012 and was published in 2015. It found that in Jordan the rights of persons with disabilities enjoy political support at every level, which intensified with the drafting of the Convention. To support the rights detailed in the Convention, the Government took the following political measures:

- Formation in 2006 of a royal commission to draft the national strategy on the rights of persons with disabilities;
- Adoption of the **National Strategy for Persons with Disabilities, 2007-2015**;
- Publication of the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (No. 31 of 2007)**;
- Establishment of the Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities as an independent national institution responsible for policymaking and planning. The Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities was established pursuant to article 6 of the **Act on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (No. 31 of 2007)**. The Council is an independent national institution that supports persons with disabilities, defends their interests, designs policies, and unites efforts to improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities and facilitate their integration in society. Article 7 of the Act sets out the functions and powers of the Council, and include (relating to persons with disabilities): drafting policies, proposing legislative amendments, participating in efforts to realise the goals set out in international instruments and treaties (UN 2015).

A shadow report on the status of implementation of CRPD in Jordan was written in 2017 and submitted to the 17th Session of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Information and Research Center - King Hussein Foundation, Identity Center, and the “I am Human” Society for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It was produced in cooperation with Persons with Disabilities Organisations in Jordan. In 2016, the Higher Council for People with Disabilities conducted a legislative review of the **Disable People Rights Law (DPRL) No. 31 of 2007**, and drafted a new law that focuses the rights of persons with disabilities. (Information and

Research Center et al 2017). The new law on the **Rights of People with Disabilities (PWD)**, was endorsed by the Jordanian Lower House in May 2017. The law has a clear anti-discrimination provision and is based on a broadened definition of disability. The law was reported by Azzeh (2017) as being the most advanced law of its kind in the Arab region. The new law introduces the concept of informed consent, which gives citizens with disabilities the right to decide for themselves after receiving enough information about the consequences of each of their decisions. Writing in the Jordan Times, Dupire (2018) states that the concept of informed consent allows citizens with disabilities the right to make their own decisions. According to Human Rights Watch (2017) the 2017 Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that a person with a disability, or the legal guardian of a child with a disability, must freely consent to “every action, procedure, or legal measure to be taken regarding their rights or freedoms after being notified, in a way that he/she understands the content, results, and impacts thereof”, which underscores the autonomy and inherent dignity of people with disabilities to be treated like anyone else.

With regards to violence, the new law not only holds those who abuse persons with disabilities accountable, but also those who restrict them from enjoying their rights. Muhannad Azzeh, secretary general of the Higher Council for People with Disabilities stated that “The new legislation perceives those with disabilities in a new way by adopting a definition of disability that takes into account the physical barriers that hinder their ability to lead a normal life,” as the previous law only considered the “pure medical angle of disability, without giving much notice to the physical and behavioural barriers that stand in the way of those with disabilities... the country is obligated to explore all means and tools to acquaint people with disabilities of the consequences of any of their decisions and allow them to practice their legal capacity as citizens” (Azzeh 2017, p.1).

The Shadow Report from 2017 found that various Jordanian laws lack effective and necessary measures to empower persons with disabilities. Some national legislation are inconsistent with CRPD principles. Discrimination against persons with disability, and passive violations of their rights are evident in Jordan and play a role in their marginalisation. In terms of general recommendations, the Shadow report recommends the following:

- Jordan ratifies the Optional Protocol to the CRPD to promote the support and legal protection of the rights of persons with disability.
- National legislation must be reviewed and discriminatory provisions that impede persons with disability rights must be repealed.
- National policies and strategies must include the rights of PWDs.
- Financial penalties must be imposed against anyone who violates the requirements of the National Building Code. Existing schools and universities must be refurbished to facilitate access to students with disabilities.
- Texts governing legal competence must be amended in such a manner as to achieve full recognition of persons with disability rights before the law. Civil Code and Personal Status Code provisions related to impediments to legal competence must also be amended. Paragraphs in the Electoral Law that deny the right to vote and stand for election to persons with mental disability must be repealed.
- Legislative texts and measures must be enacted to require governmental and private agencies to stipulate in their publications reasonable methods for PWDs to access their information, data and statistics in an equitable manner.

- A legal loophole (Article 13 of the Labor Law) that allows employers to evade recruitment of persons with disability must be addressed. The law must guarantee persons with disability their right to work.
- A new national strategy for persons with disability must be adopted.
- A mechanism must be established to monitor, address and eliminate violations and discriminatory practices against persons with disabilities (Information and Research Center et al 2017).

The Inclusive Decisions for Equal and Accountable Societies (IDEAS) was a three-year British Council project which was co-funded by the European Commission. It ran in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, and Ukraine from 2013. The IDEAS team was approached by HRH Prince Mired Bin Ra'ad Bin Zaid, and asked to review the new disabilities law which Jordan is proposing to increase the rights of persons with disabilities in political life (British Council 2016).

Dupire (2018) states that recent penal code amendments, including an aggravating factor for crimes against people with disabilities, represent an achievement with regards to realising the rights of persons with disabilities.

The following are important highlights from the 2017 Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Human Rights Watch 2017):

- Article 4 calls for inclusion of people with disabilities into all areas of life.
- Article 6 extends the law's protections to people with temporary disabilities (meaning those expected to recede within 2 years).
- Article 27 mandates the Social Development Ministry to create a comprehensive national plan for alternatives to governmental residential institutions and prohibits licensing new residential institution for people with disabilities

With regards to employment and work, as already described above, Jordan's Law **No. 31 on the Rights of Disabled Persons (2007)**, **Article 4/3** sets a quota to ensure persons with disability are not excluded from the workforce. It states that for organisations with 25 and 50 members of staff, one person with disability must be employed. For organisations with over 50 members of staff, four percent of employees must have disabilities (ESCWA/League of Arab States 2014).

With regards to education, the right of children with disabilities to access education is protected in law, under the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. However, much work is required to deliver children with disabilities the life guaranteed to them by law. Persons with disabilities are defined as "those with a total or partial failure in any of the senses or physical, psychological or mental abilities, to an extent that limits their possibility of learning, training or work so that they cannot meet the requirements of normal life, as experienced by their able-bodied peers" (Al-Dababneh, Al-Zboon & Baibers 2017, P. 364). Intellectual disabilities, learning disability or autism may be identified and classified according to the definition in the national legislation. The Ministry of Health classification of disabilities (based on mental, hearing, visual and motor) is applied according to diagnosis procedures at the diagnosis of disabilities centre (Al-Dababneh, Al-Zboon & Baibers 2017, UN 2015).

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